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AND 9/11

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THE WORLD CRIES OUT FOR TRUTH



EXCHANGE



R.O. BLECHMAN

Anti-Semitism—New or Old?

Deerfield, Ill.

■ Recent writings on anti-Semitism by a number of prominent authors have suggested that Jews are confronting a new brand of anti-Jewish vitriol and violence that is distinct from classical anti-Semitism because it cloaks itself in the increasingly acceptable politics of anti-Zionism. Evidence that much anti-Zionism and rhetoric that demonizes Israel is anti-Semitism in disguise, and the sense of panic that pervades much of the writing on this subject, seem to have so irked Brian Klug ["The Myth of the New Anti-Semitism," Feb. 2] that he rejects out of hand the idea that Jews are confronting a new wave of anti-Semitism.

Klug is right to take issue with one claim made by many commentators on the "new anti-Semitism": Advocacy of anti-Zionism and binationalism vis-à-vis the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not inherently anti-Semitic. Both can be, and have been, advanced in ways that acknowledge the intense need that many Jews, both in Israel and around the world, feel for a strong, secure Israel—for example, in proposals for a binational confederal regime that might evolve by mutual consent from two working democratic states at peace, Israel and Palestine, modeled in some respects on the European Union. But in his zealous effort to reject the logic of the "new anti-Semitism" writers, Klug refuses to admit the pervasiveness of anti-Jewish racism that today underlies much of the anti-Zionism and anti-Israel invective in the Arab world and on the European left.

In Klug's eyes, neither the anti-Zionist rhetoric nor the attacks of recent years on Jewish synagogues and individuals in Europe and the Middle East stem from "racist stereotyping" of Jews. Rather, they are directed, albeit misguided, at Jews as representatives of the State of Israel. Klug points out that Israeli leaders, inspired by the Zionist premise that all Jews are members of the Jewish people, have made every effort to portray Israel as an expression of Jews worldwide. So it should come as no surprise, the argument goes, that some in the Arab and Muslim communities who take offense at Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza would take Jews personally to task, even targeting them for violent retribution. Klug informs us that when anti-Jewish, anti-Israel attitudes are motivated by a predominantly anti-Western, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist perspective—even invoking "general principles of justice and human rights"—such animus toward Israel and Jews does not reflect "anti-Semitic prejudice."

There are several problems with this picture. First, there is a centuries-old legacy of anti-Semitism motivated not mainly by religious, ultra-nationalist or fascist prejudices and myths but very largely by political, social and economic competition, by a lofty adherence to universalism and equal rights, to anti-clericalism and anti-capitalism, among some portions of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century left—an anti-Semitism of the left, "the socialism of fools." This strain of modern anti-Semitism owes its provenance as much to some of the Enlightenment's founders as it does to animosities unleashed by the emancipation of European Jewry, the integration of Jews into the economic and political life of the European states.

Second, racism is commonly defined as prejudice or wrongful discrimination against a racial or ethnic group, fed by false stereotypes;

Even if the rise in anti-Jewish hate crimes reflects anger over Israel's policies, this in no way vitiates their anti-Semitic character.

anti-Semitism as unwarranted "hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). It follows that anti-Semitism is a form of racism toward Jews, whereby unwarranted hostility or wrongful discrimination, based on false, vilifying beliefs, is aimed at Jews as a group, or toward individual Jews as members of that group. That the primary source of these beliefs and practices lies in their adherents' economic and political interests or cultures in no way vitiates their anti-Semitic character.

The *reductio ad absurdum* of Klug's characterization of anti-Semitism becomes apparent in his idiosyncratic insistence that acts widely regarded as anti-Semitic hate crimes are not anti-Semitic simply because they are prompted in part by anger over Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. Klug maintains that "the evidence suggests that the perpetrators of the anti-Jewish attacks in France were animated by political outrage, not bigotry. According to the Israeli Foreign Ministry itself, most of the incidents were a protest against inequities in the occupied territories." European Commission President Romano Prodi is only the latest of many EU leaders, including five European interior ministers, who have publicly affirmed that they view such acts as anti-Semitic. Klug seems to want to have his cake and eat it too. He admits that anti-Semitism "without a doubt... would not be spreading within Muslim communities in Europe were it not for

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," but then denies that anti-Jewish attacks by Muslims in Europe are anti-Semitic. If Klug is right, EU leaders are mistaken in outlawing politically motivated violent acts against innocent Jews and Muslims as instances of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim racism. They should presumably treat such acts as nothing more than breaches of the criminal laws of assault, battery or arson that happen to be animated by political passions. Klug's constricted view would instantly redefine as merely "reprehensible, but not anti-Semitic," the hatred many nineteenth-century Europeans harbored toward Jews on the basis of the generalization that Jews were rich bankers and exploitative moneylenders. This hatred inspired anti-Jewish pogroms, quotas and restrictions in employment and education, and support for anti-Semitic political parties in various European states. Yet Klug's linguistic legerdemain would define it away at the stroke of a pen. And wasn't the stereotyping of Jews in Europe (which "exceeded the evidence" but did not rise to an "a priori prejudice," in Klug's idiom) rooted in the actual prevalence of Jews in trade and finance, much as the faulty inference that all Jews are responsible for Israel's actions toward the Palestinians is rooted in the fact that Israel defines itself as the Jewish state, and in the solidarity that most Diaspora Jews (even those who dissent from the policies of Ariel Sharon) feel toward that state and its people? Klug tries to show that some element he identifies as essential to classic anti-Semitism ("a priori prejudice") is missing from those species of anti-Zionism and anti-Israel invective that are held up by many Jews as paradigm cases of the new anti-Semitism. Yet this ignores the real question: whether the "new anti-Semitism" shares enough features with its classic progenitor to be characterized as "anti-Semitism."

Klug's willingness to sanction all forms of anti-Zionism and binational advocacy—to deny that any species of this rhetoric is inherently anti-Jewish racism—sweeps under the rug two overriding, and deeply troubling, facts. First, Arab and Palestinian anti-Zionist binationalists, and their fellow travelers on the Western left, often propose, with overweening optimism, a unitary "democratic" state as an alternative to a two-state formula. In this arrangement, Palestinians will inevitably form the majority and Israeli Jews at best a tolerated, subjugated minority, most likely recapitulating the tragic fates of multiethnic polities like Lebanon, Bosnia and Yugoslavia. Much binational advocacy among Palestinians, Arabs and the Western left is thus malign and coercive, a fig

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EDITORIALS

Time for Truth

The two brothers who scaled the face of Big Ben in London with a banner reading TIME FOR TRUTH sent the right message on the anniversary of the beginning of the US-led war on Iraq and just days before the start of hearings in Washington by an independent commission looking into the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

At a moment when there are no easy answers as to how to end the US occupation of Iraq without compounding existing instability, the one thing citizens need most is straight talk: about who knew what about Al Qaeda before 9/11 and about why the Iraq war was fought, among other questions. But truth still seems in short supply, as evidenced by the furious Administration response to a new memoir by former White House national security official Richard Clarke, who describes a President obsessed with Iraq on the day after the Al Qaeda attacks even after being reminded that no links had been found between the two. At the hearings, Clarke accused the Administration of failing to treat terrorism as an urgent matter before the attacks and said he believes that "by invading Iraq the President of the United States has greatly undermined the war on terrorism" (see David Corn, page 4).

The White House should keep in mind what happened in Spain, where a government already unpopular because of its support of Bush's war was voted out after trying to pin the blame for railway bombings on domestic rather than Islamic terrorists. "The vote was a punishment for the years of lies," said Iris Bernal, a participant in a March 20 antiwar demonstration in Madrid. But the White House response to the Spanish election results was to cry

"appeasement" and to disparage the Spaniards for exercising their democratic right to throw out dishonest leaders.

The globe's citizens know better than to accept Bush's skewed worldview; they see the Iraq war as a dangerous diversion, not an effective response to Al Qaeda-style violence. According to a survey by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Majorities in Germany, Turkey and France—and half of the British and Russians—believe the conflict in Iraq undermined the war on terrorism." And, the survey reveals, "at least half the respondents in the eight other countries view the U.S. as less trustworthy as a consequence of the war." These sentiments were widely held among the million or more people who took to the streets on March 20 in more than 275 cities around the world—from Australia to Italy, from Bangladesh to Brazil—to protest US policy in Iraq. In London, thousands gathered in Trafalgar Square for a demonstration whose slogan was NO MORE LIES. In New York, protesters' placards ran to variations on BUSH LIED, THEY DIED. In an interview with Britain's *Independent* on the anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, former President Carter described the war as "based on lies and misinterpretations from London and from Washington."

Doubts—and demands for accountability—are growing. A full-page ad in the *New York Times* sponsored by Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities notes that the cost of deceptions over Iraq "dwarfs the damage done by the worst corporate scandals" and calls on Bush to "step forward and take personal responsibility." A MoveOn.org/Win Without War petition that has already garnered more than half a million signatures demands that Congress censure Bush for betraying the country's trust. As the business leaders' ad notes, it's "past time for finger pointing." It's time for citizens, and voters, to make Bush pay.

The Nation.

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More Blame for Bush

Just as George W. Bush's election campaign was wrapping its candidate in the bloody flag of 9/11—using footage of the dead victims in an ad blitz that praised Bush's leadership and assailed presumptive Democratic nominee John Kerry as a weak-on-terrorism waffler—reality intruded. Its bearer was Richard Clarke, a longtime national security official who was White House counterterrorism coordinator for Clinton and, early on, for Bush. In his new book, he accuses the Bush crowd of neglecting the effort against Al Qaeda before September 11 and of misguiding the war on terrorism afterward.

According to Clarke, shortly after the 9/11 strikes, Bush encouraged him to examine whether Iraq was behind the event. When Clarke informed Bush that the national security community had already established that there was no connection, Bush insisted Clarke look again—"in a very intimidating way," Clarke told *60 Minutes*. When Clarke, FBI experts and CIA analysts re-examined the issue and produced a report that reached the same no-connection conclusion, the White House, he says, replied, "Wrong answer." Clarke claims that Bush and his aides immediately wanted to use 9/11 as a pretext to bomb Iraq. But, he notes, there never was evidence that Iraq was in cahoots with Al Qaeda. For Clarke, the Iraq war was a distraction that "strengthened the fundamentalist, radical Islamic terrorist movement worldwide." And he maintains that the Administration misled the public regarding a link between 9/11 and the war on Iraq. ("The White House carefully manipulated opinion. Never quite lied but gave the very strong impression that Iraq did it.")

The Bush crew did not only exploit 9/11, Clarke alleges; it failed to respond vigorously to warnings about the threat from Al Qaeda. He tells of an April 2001 meeting in which Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz dismissed Al Qaeda as a concern and said Iraqi terrorism was the number-one issue. Wolfowitz denies that, but the charge that the Bushies fixated on Iraq is not new. Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill maintained that Bush was obsessed with attacking Iraq practically from Day One. And there were previous indications that the Administration was less than vigilant before 9/11. In July 2001 an intelligence warning noted that "we believe that [Osama bin Laden] will launch a significant attack against U.S. and/or Israeli interests in the coming weeks. The attack will be spectacular and designed to inflict mass casualties." How did Bush respond to this dramatic warning? There are no signs that he did much. The White House even refused to allow the House and Senate intelligence committees to say whether this warning reached Bush; committee sources report that it did.

"There's a lot of blame to go around, and I probably deserve some blame, too," Clarke says. But Bush has managed to escape blame for the government's performance on and before 9/11. After the attacks, he said that before September 11 no one could have imagined such a plot. But since the mid-1990s the US intelligence community had collected information that Al Qaeda was interested in a 9/11-like attack. And the CIA had tracked two of the hijackers before the strikes but failed to tell the FBI they were in or coming to the United States. Bush has refused to hold anyone ac-

COMMENT

countable for the screw-ups that led to 9/11.

Clarke's indictment is tough: "I find it outrageous that the President is running for re-election on the grounds that he's done such great things about terrorism. He ignored it." Given the rough treatment Clarke—a Republican hawk who served under Reagan and Bush I—got from the Bush White House in response to his book, it is important to note that he is not the first national security professional to blast Bush's approach to terrorism. Retired Gen. Anthony Zinni, the former head of Central Command, called the war on Iraq "a brain fart." Rand Beers, the National Security Council's senior director for terrorism, quit in disgust over Bush's policies. (He went on to work for Kerry.) And there have been others.

The Administration, naturally, denies Clarke's complaints. That is why the work of the independent 9/11 commission is important. The panel, if it does its job, can sort this out and provide the public with evidence for judging Bush's handling of 9/11. Right after Clarke's book hit, the commission received testimony from him and other officials. The less-than-enlightening sessions (with Clarke's appearance the exception) showed that the commission will have to penetrate plenty of cover-your-ass rhetoric to assess accountability. Clinton aides said they did all that was possible; Bush aides claimed they were moving ahead with plans to smash Al Qaeda before 9/11. But in interim reports, the commission notes that the Bush I and Clinton administrations were slow to understand the Al Qaeda threat. It also found that Bush II failed to continue Clinton's efforts to enlist Saudi Arabia in the campaign against Al Qaeda and that Donald Rumsfeld's team at the Pentagon had not been "especially interested" in counterterrorism.

It is telling that Bush has taken a dodgy attitude toward the commission. In January the White House said Bush would not grant the commission a much-needed time extension or more than an hour of his time. Bush later retreated from these positions, but the White House still said he would appear before only two of the ten commissioners, not the entire body. (And though National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice went on TV to slam Clarke, she refused to testify publicly before the commission.) Clarke's book and the public record offer plenty of material that could keep ten commissioners and Bush busy for several hours, if not days. No wonder Bush is trying to minimize his time before the body.

Bush, looking to win votes as a wartime President, wants to make 9/11 a campaign issue. Perhaps he ought to be careful what he wishes for.

DAVID CORN

Playing the Security Card



To all the arguments lodged against gay marriage, add this one—it's a matter of national security. So argued a woman interviewed recently by NPR at the National Association of Evangelicals convention in Colorado Springs. Her reasoning: By breaking down the family, we're not having enough kids, while "other countries" with an agenda to hurt America are having boatloads of babies. If we legalize gay marriage, the terrorists will eventually outnumber us.

One might be tempted to dismiss this as a desperate rant if it weren't so close to arguments the Bush Administration itself

has been making. As the election campaign gets under way, national security has become the ultimate all-purpose trump card. The Bush crowd will play it anywhere.

Consider Attorney General John Ashcroft's justification for a ruling last year that all Haitians seeking refuge here should be detained. In Ashcroft's view, national security warranted locking them all up, not because any of them posed a threat to national security but because detaining them all would deter other Haitians from seeking refuge here, and that would save money that could then be deployed elsewhere to protect our national security. On this theory, any initiative that reduces government expenditures—from welfare reform to cutting spending on environmental protection—is warranted by national security, because those funds can then be used to fight terrorism.

More recently, the Administration has invoked national security in appealing a landmark human rights case to the Supreme Court. In *Sosa v. Alvarez-Machain*, the Administration contends that court enforcement of human rights protections might cramp its style as it fights for our security. The case involves a 1789 statute, the Alien Tort Claims Act, that human rights victims have used to hold perpetrators liable for their crimes against humanity. The law is a beacon in the human rights field because it provides a critical vehicle for developing and enforcing human rights law in individual cases.

This time, however, the case implicates human rights violations by the United States. The case challenges the abduction and kidnapping of a Mexican doctor at the behest of Drug Enforcement Administration officials to stand trial here for alleged complicity in the killing of a DEA agent in Mexico. Dr. Alvarez-Machain was acquitted at his criminal trial, then turned around and sued his abductors, obtaining a judgment against them for international human rights violations in his cross-border abduction.

Urging the Supreme Court to overturn the judgment, the Bush Administration has again played the national security card, arguing that if federal courts enforce international human rights norms, their decisions might interfere with the government's prerogatives in the war on terror. But of course the whole point of international law is to limit the prerogatives of nations, at least when it comes to fundamental rights owed to all persons.

The most recent development along these lines is a Congressional resolution introduced by Republican Representative Tom Feeney, maintaining that the Supreme Court should not look to foreign law at all, much less human rights law, in deciding constitutional cases. The resolution was apparently prompted by recent Supreme Court decisions, including last year's ruling invalidating sodomy laws, that have looked to other countries' judicial decisions for guidance in resolving similar disputes here. It is commonplace in many countries to consider the decisions of other nations' courts, but it is apparently anathema to those who contend that we can and should write our own rules, regardless of what the rest of the world thinks. It is no coincidence that the resolution has surfaced at a time when the Supreme Court is about to address the detentions at Guantánamo Bay, a practice that many foreign and international legal experts have condemned as lawless.

The irony is that when we lock up people without evidence that they are dangerous, treat human rights as mere obstacles to our po-

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COMMENT

litical prerogatives and dismiss other nations' laws and decisions as entirely irrelevant to our resolution of fundamental issues of justice, we make ourselves less, not more, secure. A Pew Charitable Trust poll recently found that anti-Americanism is at an all-time high around the world. Much of the resentment stems from our claim that we can bypass any principle of international law that we deem inconvenient.

In the long run, it is this rising tide of anti-Americanism that poses the greatest threat to our security. The true path to safety lies in respect for human rights and the views and experiences of others, not in asserting, in the name of national security, unilateral authority to be a law unto ourselves. DAVID COLE

David Cole, Nation legal affairs correspondent, is the author of Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism (New Press).

Israel Plays With Fire

At 5:20 on the morning of March 22, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Palestinian Hamas, was leaving a mosque in the Gaza Strip when he was killed in an Israeli helicopter gunship attack—a “targeted” assassination that left nine others dead and caused several serious injuries. A half-blind quadriplegic in his late 60s, Yassin was in his wheelchair when he died; his body will be added to the trail of thousands of Palestinian and Arab corpses that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (who is reported to have personally supervised the Gaza hit) has piled up since the 1950s, when he conducted brutal raids against Arab villagers across Israel's border. The attack—condemned by the entire world apart from the United States—is yet another reminder of Sharon's disregard not only of Arab life but of the lives of his fellow Israelis, many of whom are likely to perish in the “earthquake” of revenge Hamas has promised in retaliation.

Sheik Yassin, to be sure, was not a man of peace. His group has killed hundreds of Israeli civilians in suicide attacks since the mid-1990s. But Yassin, along with Ismail Abu Shanab, who was assassinated last year, represented the more moderate current within Hamas; although Yassin refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Jewish state, he had spoken favorably of a “hundred-year truce” with it and had indicated that violent resistance would cease once Israel withdrew to its 1967 borders. Now that Yassin is dead, the only men left standing are the hard-liners, led by Dr. Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi, the sheik's successor in Gaza. Some “friends” of Israel—a curious term for those who cheer Israel on as it marches down the road to self-destruction—will doubtless observe that Yassin would not himself have flinched from a comparable attack on Israelis. But that is precisely the point. Under Sharon's leadership, Israel is increasingly behaving like a rogue state, heedless of international legal norms and contemptuous of civilian life. With its indiscriminate raids, the government has chosen the path of escalation, putting its own citizens in jeopardy.

The Yassin assassination, a turning point in a conflict that grows uglier by the day, appears to be a calculated and deeply cynical move by Sharon, “the champion of violent solutions,” in the

words of Israeli historian Avi Shlaim. Contrary to official claims, the intention is not to fight terror but to exploit it politically. The Yassin killing comes on the heels of Sharon's February 2 announcement that he intends to withdraw Israeli troops from Gaza in one to two years and to evacuate Gaza's 7,500 Jewish settlers. Sharon's deepest fear is that the Gaza withdrawal will be perceived as a victory for Hamas and Islamic Jihad, much as Ehud Barak's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000 was hailed as a triumph for the Shiite guerrilla organization Hezbollah. To avert such an outcome, Sharon appears determined to decapitate Hamas's leadership—Israel has vowed to carry out more such attacks—and to make Gaza bleed. The recent twin suicide bombings by Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the Israeli port city of Ashdod, in which ten Israelis were killed—which followed the killing of twenty-six Palestinians in Gaza over two weeks of Israeli incursions—was the perfect pretext to launch the army's offensive. There may be another reason as well: The day after Yassin's assassination, Oded Granot, the chief Arab affairs correspondent for Is-

(Continued on Page 21)

GAVIN TRILIN

ANTONIN SCALIA EXPLAINS WHY DUCK-HUNTING WITH DICK CHENEY AS CHENEY'S CASE COMES BEFORE THE COURT IS PERFECTLY OK

This criticism Nino calls absurd.
It's true that Quackscam is an ugly word.

He says that simple folks—the likes of us—
Show ignorance by making such a fuss
About some guys who often fly deluxe
In White House planes to blinds for shooting ducks.
Unless, of course, we've hung with shahs or rockers,
We just can't grasp the life of big *k'nockers*.
There are, he plainly told the ones who'd jeered,
Some people too important to be shmeered.

The strongest point he made was when he wrote
That such a trip could hardly change his vote.
That's one thing that his critics can't rebut:
He'd vote for Cheney's side no matter what.
Then find some case law more or less in line.
If others do the same, that's five of nine.
You think they haven't done such things before?
Get law books out, and look up *Bush v. Gore*.

Lighting Technology for eye comfort

A floor lamp that spreads sunshine all over a room

The Balanced Spectrum™ floor lamp brings many of the benefits of natural daylight indoors for glare-free lighting that's perfect for a variety of indoor activities...now available for under \$80!

Ever since the first human went into a dark cave and built a fire, people have realized the importance of proper indoor lighting. Unfortunately, since Edison invented the light bulb, lighting technology has remained relatively prehistoric. Modern light fixtures do little to combat many symptoms of improper lighting, such as eyestrain, dryness or burning. As more and more of us spend longer hours in front of a computer monitor, the results are compounded. And the effects of indoor lighting are not necessarily limited to physical well being. Many people believe that the quantity and quality of light can play a part in one's mood and work performance. Now, there's a better way to bring the positive benefits of natural sunlight indoors.

Use the Balanced Spectrum™ floor lamp...



...for reading...



...at work...



...and when you need a source of natural light for close-up tasks.

Its 27-watt compact bulb is the equivalent to a 150-watt ordinary light bulb. This makes it perfect for activities such as reading, writing, sewing, needlepoint, and especially for aging eyes.

The Balanced Spectrum™ floor lamp will change the way you see and feel about your living or work spaces. Studies show that sunshine can lift your mood and your energy levels, but as we all know the sun, unfortunately, does not always shine. So to bring the benefits of natural daylight indoors, use the floor lamp that simulates the full spectrum of daylight. You will see with more clarity and enjoyment as this lamp provides sharp visibility for close tasks and reduces eyestrain.

You don't need the Sun to get many of the natural benefits of daylight

- Replicates the true spectrum of natural sunlight
- See with clarity and enjoyment
- Creates natural, glare-free light
- Dual position switch for 27 and 18 watts of power is equivalent to 150 and 100-watt incandescent bulb
- Provides sharp visibility
- Elevating and luminous
- Flexible gooseneck design
- Instant-on, flicker-free light

What's the difference with Balanced Spectrum™?

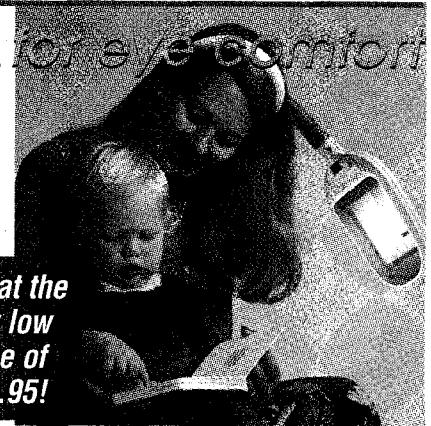
The value of a light source is measured by how well it renders all colors of the visible spectrum without bias. The Color Rendering Index (CRI) is measured on a scale of 1-100. The bulb used in the Balanced Spectrum™ lamp is an exceptional light source with a CRI of 84. This will provide better vision and energy savings through a full spectrum of light with a brighter bluish tint verses the same area lit by lighting with more of an orange or reddish tint.

Height as shown: 50"

We've looked at lots of lights, but this one offered the benefit of dual light levels of 27 and 18 watts of power equivalent to 150 and 100-watt incandescent bulbs. This lamp has a flexible gooseneck design for maximum efficiency, with an "Instant On" switch that is flicker-free. The high-tech electronics, user-friendly design, and bulb that lasts five times longer than an ordinary bulb make this product a must-have.

Try the Balanced Spectrum™ floor lamp with this special offer! Due to our overwhelming customer response, TechnoScout can offer this fantastic floor lamp for under a \$80. The Balanced Spectrum™ floor lamp also comes with a

Now at the new low price of \$79.95!



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This light can change the way you live and work

As a commercial photographer, I probably give more attention to lighting than most people and therefore was impressed with the smooth, soft daylight quality of your lamp.

Dennis M.
Richmond, VA

I sit in my comfortable chair after my husband has gone to bed, and I turn that lamp on. It makes it so nice because it's like daylight over my chair...I don't get sore eyes like I used to.

Grace A.
Margate, FL

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- Shows true colors

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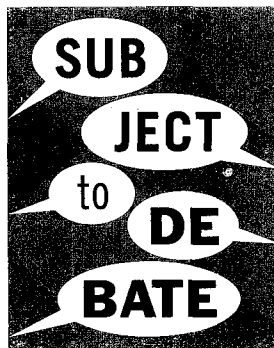
KATHA POLLITT

Pull Over, NASCAR Dads

Single women under 65—those separated, widowed, divorced or never married—represent at least 24 percent of the voting-age population and a whopping 46 percent of voting-age women. According to an influential study by the Democratic pollsters Stan Greenberg and Celinda Lake, they tend to be progressive and to lean Democratic. Indeed, if the nation's 45 million single women voted at the same rate as married women—52 percent versus 68 percent—there would be 6 million more voters in the electorate, and Gore would be in the White House today. Had they turned out at the same rate as other voters in Florida in 2000, there would have been an additional 202,640 votes cast in that state—and no razor-thin 537-vote margin. Party leaders like Ann Lewis, national chair of the DNC's Women's Vote Center, want the Democratic Party to cultivate single women and connect them with the polling booth; Page Gardner and Christina Desser have founded "Women's Voices. Women Vote" (www.wvvv.org), to reach out and register them. You've probably read about attempts to woo these "*Sex and the City* voters" in one of the dozens of nearly identical articles that have come out since Greenberg and Lake's study was released in December.

It's about time! The silly nickname aside—most unmarried women live for a month on what Carrie, Miranda, Samantha and Charlotte spend on lunch and taxis—single women are a natural constituency for the Democratic Party: They tend to be pro-choice, anti-gun, socially liberal and supporters of "big government." Single women's main issues are, theoretically, Democratic strong suits: healthcare, employment, education. Certainly it makes more sense to cultivate them than the other demographic superstars pollsters have come up with: the suburban soccer moms that were supposed to save the party's bacon in the late 1990s but have since morphed into security moms, keen on defense; or the NASCAR dads—blue-collar white men from rural and Southern parts, who tend to be conservative, live in "red" states and drawn to the racial-gender politics of the Republican Party. (Whatever happened to the waitress mom? I kind of liked her.)

The focus on single women is good in another way. For years we've been hearing that the problem with the Democratic Party was that it was too liberal, too limp-wristed, insufficiently attentive to religious voters and—especially—too pro-choice. *The American Prospect's* Michael Tomasky recently suggested that Democratic intransigence on abortion rights was alienating religious swing voters. Why not court them, he suggested, if not by naming an anti-choicer as the vice presidential candidate, then by having an anti-choice speaker at the convention? Well, perhaps because that would demoralize the legions of feminist activists already knocking themselves out for Kerry and blur the party's message: Support for abortion rights is one of the few sharp differences between the national parties (state legislatures swarm with anti-choice Dems), one that motivates more people than it turns off. I can't tell you how many progressive women I know who voted for Gore instead of Nader specifically, and sometimes



solely, because of the threat to legal abortion posed by a Bush victory. Why is it that Republicans understand so clearly that they have to keep the base happy, while the Democrats seem to delight in insulting theirs in order to court some temperamental sliver of voters who don't like them very much? Which are there more of? So-called progressive pro-lifers who care so much about forcing pregnant women to bear children that they would pull the lever for Bush, maker of dishonest war and champion of death row? Or women and men who want abortion to be legal and who fear the encroachments of sectarian religion on private life?

But there are problems with the single-women idea. For one, this is not a coherent demographic: There may be more single women than blacks, Jews and Hispanics put together, but that does not mean a Wellesley student, a welfare mother and a divorced bookkeeper have much in common. There is no NAACP for unmarried women, no equivalent of the pride, identity and agenda that mark those powerful ethnicities, and no single-woman politician who campaigns around that status. Indeed, being unmarried is more often something a female politician needs to manage carefully or risk accusations of lesbianism, man-hating, oddness or social failure. Then, too, single women are disproportionately young, mobile, struggling and/or very, very poor—all categories that are less likely to register, vote or want to vote. The qualities associated with marriage—being older, more socially and financially stable, living in one place, owning one's home, belonging to the PTA—are the same qualities that knit one in to voting. Single women are less likely to see themselves as part of the classes politics is for, the classes that actually can get something from politicians. "They don't believe politicians care about what they have to say," WVVV co-director Chris Desser told the *Christian Science Monitor*. That might sound cynical, but it may well be true.

The trouble with going after single women, those fans of progressive change, is that one has to offer them something progressive. Pay equity, for example, comes in at the top of polls of women's concerns—yet in the primary debates, Carol Moseley Braun was the only candidate who made an issue of it. Or take healthcare: Why doesn't Kerry's plan cover all of the 44 million Americans—disproportionately female Americans, by the way—now without health insurance? Education? Do the Dems really talk about fixing the public schools in ways that would affect single mothers? Tom Geoghegan, Mark Dudzik and Adolph Reed have all suggested in these pages that the Democrats mobilize young voters by proposing to make college free. It's a great idea, but nobody picked up on it. One could easily come up with similar lures for the votes of single women—a federal living wage, universal public preschool and after-school (don't forget, singles with kids don't have the luxury of staying home with them), heck, free birth control. It will be interesting to see if the Democratic campaign to sign up these voters involves offering them things they want or just telling them that they want what's on offer. ■

ERIC ALTERMAN

Widows and Orphans First...

The beast will not die. In a March 21 profile of Lizz Winstead of Air America Radio, for instance, the *Washington Post's* conservative media critic, Howard "Conflict of Interest" Kurtz, writes, "Why would people listen to Winstead and company when liberals already populate much of the media?" This nonsense allows conservatives to continue to deploy the phantom charge of a "librul media" to conduct guerrilla operations with a co-operative media against targets on the left.

A textbook example of the dishonest tactics employed by the right-wing smear machine can be found in the recent campaign against September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, a 122-member organization of the families of lost loved ones who seek to prevent the exploitation of its legacy for inappropriate (and aggressive) purposes. Group members have participated in antiwar marches and were particularly vocal when the Bush campaign used 9/11 footage in a campaign commercial designed to mask the Administration's lack of preparedness for the attack, its panicky response in the immediate aftermath and its (now obvious) bait-and-switch operation designed to justify its longtime desire to invade Iraq.

Following the airing of the Bush commercials—which were also vehemently protested by the firefighters union—Peaceful Tomorrows held a March 5 press conference in which its leaders made two requests: that the Bush campaign immediately stop running its exploitative television commercials and that no other candidates employ the imagery. That's when the firestorm began, touched off by the ravings on the nutty extremist website www.FreeRepublic.com.

Moralizing illegal-drug procurer Rush Limbaugh took an early swing at the group, complaining, "These people are poisoned. They have literally been poisoned by their hate." The recently rehatted reactionary referred to Kristen Breitweiser and Monica Gabrielle as Democratic "campaign consultants...not grieving family members...obsessed with rage and hatred." He neglected to get his facts straight, for neither of these two widows had any relationship to the organization, and Breitweiser is a Republican who voted for George W. Bush.

No doubt the most influential attack was that published by the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*. Complaining of the "free face time" that media types give to victims' families, they spun out a complicated conspiracy theory in which they charged that group members were "subsidiaries of established anti-Bush forces—political entities committed to defeating the President this fall."

The argument—which was repeated to varying degrees by Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Brit Hume, Charles Krauthammer, *The Weekly Standard*, the *New York Post* and Richard Mellon Scaife's *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, among others—goes like this: Peaceful Tomorrows is "a front organization for the Democratic Party," because it is a "project of the leftist Tides Center," which "provides back-office services to ideologically acceptable 'charitable' organizations for a fee. The Center receives generous

**STOP THE
PRESSES**



financial assistance from liberal foundations, including various Heinz family endowments. The chairman of at least one of those endowments is Teresa Heinz, wife of Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry." The *New York Post* picked up the gauntlet under the headline "Mrs. Kerry's Cash Connection," insisting that "Peaceful Tomorrows' parent group, the San Francisco-based Tides Foundation, has received millions from foundations controlled by Kerry's heiress wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry."

Here are the facts: The Tides Center does provide administrative and financial services to Peaceful Tomorrows and is paid 9 percent of all the funds the organization raises in return. The Tides Foundation, which funds the center, among many other causes, made four grants to Peaceful Tomorrows during 2002 and 2003, totaling \$34,665. Meanwhile, the Heinz Endowments, of which one is headed by Teresa Heinz Kerry, made grants to the Tides Foundation of \$230,000 between 1994 and 1998. These were specifically earmarked to support a pollution prevention initiative and other environmentally friendly practices by industries in western Pennsylvania. In other words, there is absolutely no connection between Mrs. Kerry and the Heinz Endowments and Peaceful Tomorrows. The Heinz donations were made between four and eight years before the group even existed. They were made to support local environmental causes. And absolutely none of the money in question ever ended up in the coffers of this tiny, frugally funded organization of those who lost someone the day America was attacked.

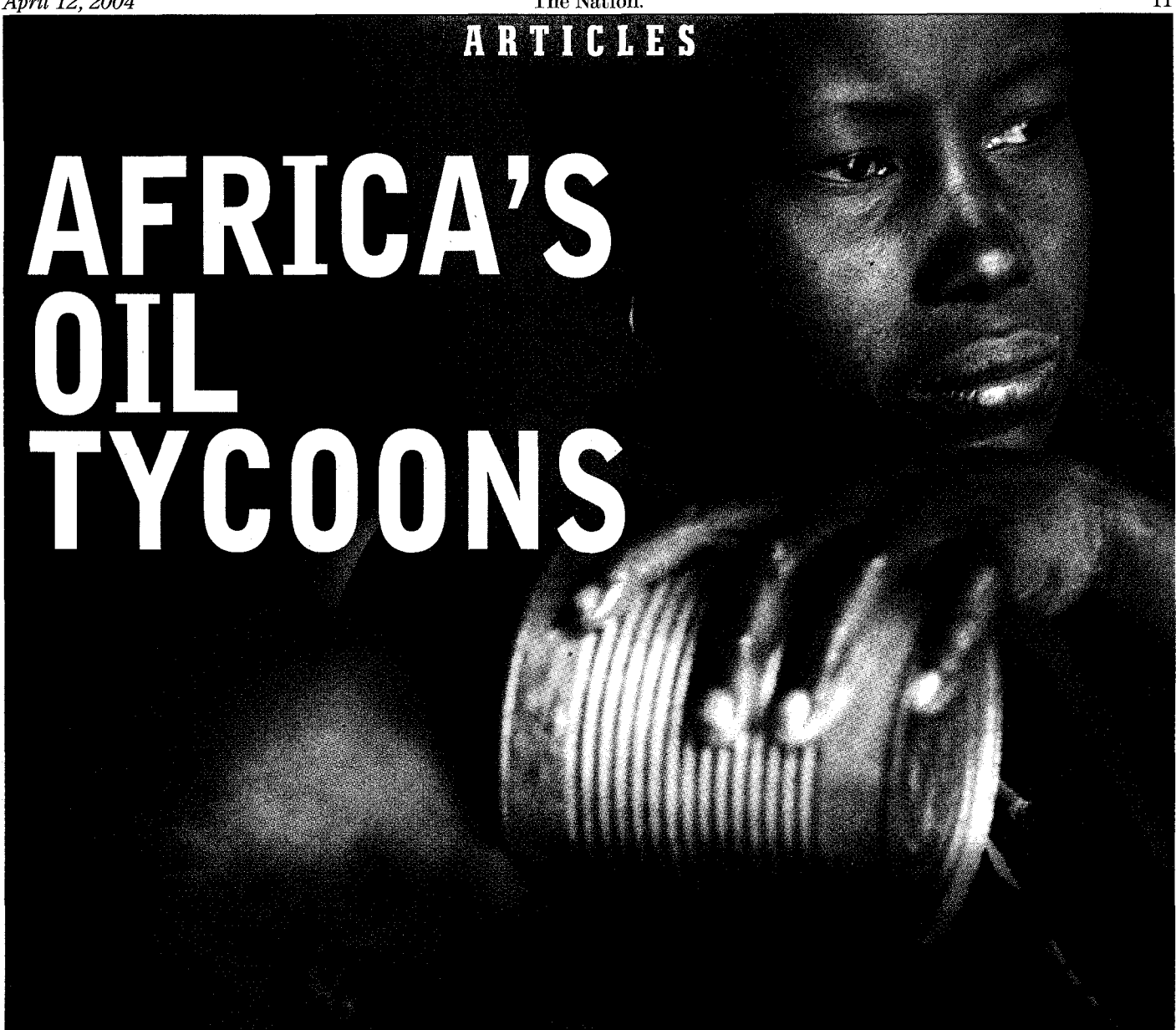
You might imagine, Limbaugh aside, that given what these people have suffered, even conservative hacks might exercise a little journalistic care before attempting to demonize them. You would be wrong. While the *Journal* editors lecture the rest of the media ("We sympathize just a little with the failure of the press corps to get to the bottom of this") they themselves never bothered to contact anyone at Peaceful Tomorrows before launching their misguided missive, according to Johnny Temple of Akashic Books/RDV Books, which published *September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows: Turning Our Grief Into Action for Peace*.

As it turns out, according to a survey published in *USA Today*, 66 percent of Americans questioned share the view that all candidates—including George W. Bush—should refrain from using 9/11 imagery in their ads. A clear subtext of this campaign, however, is the far right's desire to turn Teresa Kerry into its newest version of Hillary Clinton, whom it succeeded in demonizing as a radical leftist in much of the mainstream media despite her middle-of-the-road, "New Democrat" leanings.

This episode should serve as a warning shot to the Kerry campaign and to all organizations seeking to hold this Administration accountable. The far-right smear machine is saying: We will do anything—up to and including McCarthyite attacks on 9/11 widows and orphans—to insure victory in November. We are on the cusp of something extremely ugly in 2004. ■

ARTICLES

AFRICA'S OIL TYCOONS



Luanda, Angola

The red, white and blue helicopter soared through streaming white clouds and sunny blue sky. Below, tiny Lego-like platforms juttied up from the shimmering Cabinda Bay. But as we neared the Takula oilfield, dozens of towering flares breathed huge swirls of fire. The tides of the Congo surged into the waves of the Atlantic, and the ethereal cloud formations were engulfed by a yellow-brown haze.

This is the heart of Angola. Although separated from the rest of the country by the Congo River and a strip of land that's part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Portugal only incorporated the province of Cabinda into Angola in 1956), the twenty-four-hour oil operations that suck coffee-colored crude off the coast of Cabinda are the country's economic engine. They are what financed the government's army during a civil war that ended just two years ago. And they're the most obvious sign of the West's relentless tentacles reaching into Angola today.

The constant cough of noxious black fumes is the least of their consequences. Twenty-seven years of civil war fueled by a lethal mix of oil, diamonds and cold war enemies have left one of Africa's potentially richest countries a shambles. Although its own kleptocratic leaders and homegrown revolutionaries deserve much of the blame, it's impossible to divorce what's happened from the constant manipulation of outsiders—from the Portuguese, who kept Angola under the thumb of colonial rule for 500 years, to the United States and white-led South Africa, which bank-rolled Angola's rebels during the cold war, to the multinationals draining the country of its natural resources today.

I went to Angola to try to understand how a country so rich in the most coveted resource of our time—oil—can fall to the bottom of almost every scale of human development. Angola pumps almost a million barrels a day; the United States imports more oil from Angola than from Kuwait. But 70 percent of Angolans live in poverty. Eighty

percent have no access to basic medical care. Average life expectancy is only forty years, and three in ten children will die before reaching their fifth birthday.

It's no secret that Angola's leaders are siphoning off huge amounts of state money. But lurking beneath the sinister statistics and corrosive corruption is the murky involvement of Western governments and multinational oil companies. What role are they playing in the postwar transformation of Angola?

Luanda's Hotel Tropico, a favorite among oilmen and World Bank and IMF officials, offers a clue. When I arrived in Angola's capital bleary-eyed early one morning in mid-October, the slick new lobby was packed. While the Angolan staff scrambled to confirm reservations on malfunctioning computers, middle-aged white men elbowed their way to the long mahogany counter demanding to know why their rooms weren't ready. Others dozed in overstuffed armchairs among stacks of suitcases, waking intermittently to drink espresso or whiskey and smoke cigarettes. It was 5 AM, and although Angola has no tourist industry, the hotel was full and our rooms wouldn't be ready before noon. Until then, no one seemed to be leaving the building.

In fact, I'd been warned not to walk outside, and I quickly understood why. Exploring the streets of Luanda is harrowing. It requires careful maneuvering among fragments of broken sidewalk and heaps of reeking garbage. Reckless drivers on rough dirt roads kick up a choking dust that sticks to your sweat in the sweltering heat. And it's almost impossible to make it five blocks without being splashed by sewage. Frequent petty crime in Luanda casts a pall of fear that only ratchets up the tension. This once-thriving "Paris of Africa," now a mix of broken-down colonial villas, 1960s-style apartment blocks and sprawling shantytowns, has essentially been abandoned by the government. Built for a population of about half a million, it's now home to eight times that many, mostly refugees who fled the ravaged countryside during the civil war. They arrived in the capital and built a vast maze of *musseques*—clusters of cement-block hovels with rusted-scrap tin roofs, held down by stones and patched with plastic sheeting. The government has thrown up its hands: It doesn't provide electricity or running water in much of the city, let alone maintain the roads or pick up the garbage.

To avoid this unpleasantness, most foreigners—whether working for oil companies, aid organizations or the United Nations—travel around the city in chauffeur-driven SUVs. Those who work for ChevronTexaco, which dominates the Angolan oil industry, aren't even allowed to drive themselves. They're also forbidden to venture into the countryside. The limit is the golf course in nearby Luanda Sul, where the company maintains a gated, guarded compound of Southern California-style homes for its employees.

Still, even the most privileged in Luanda can't completely avoid its conditions. When I caught a ride to Luanda Sul with a BP oil executive, the driver had to navigate the Range Rover over

jammed mud roads and crater-sized potholes, swerving to avoid the children who picked through mountains of roadside garbage. Men hawked sundries from car to car while women sold produce in the dirt alongside open sewers.

It wasn't always this way. The Portuguese were first drawn to Luanda in 1575 because its port offered access to legendary silver mines. But the slave trade soon became the main attraction: In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Portuguese captured and shipped up to 2 million Angolans to South America and the Caribbean. Even after slavery was outlawed, the Portuguese used forced labor in Angola's countryside to grow cotton, sugar, rice and tobacco for export; others reaped riches off the country's vast diamond reserves. Luanda boomed in the 1930s, and by the 1970s it was among the continent's most modern and picturesque cities, its wide avenues boasting stunning examples of the finest Portuguese colonial architecture.

But all was not well. Angolans were agitating for independence and, after a military coup overthrew Portugal's forty-eight-year dictatorship in 1974, found themselves suddenly free. The

bulk of the Portuguese elite professional and middle class abandoned the country. With no foundation for democracy and only the example of half a millennium of exploitation,

It's no secret that Angola's leaders are siphoning off money. But what role are Western governments and multinationals playing?

Angola fell prey to vicious factional fighting. The Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA, representing urban, middle-class, mixed-race Angolans, quickly won control of the government with the backing of the Soviet Union and Cuba. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, or UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, was supported in most rural areas of the country.

But if Angolans viewed the conflict as a civil war over ethnic, geographic and resource control, the West saw it as yet another domino to be defended in the cold war. UNITA quickly won support from neighboring South Africa and the United States.

By the time the war ended, with the assassination of Savimbi in 2002, more than 500,000 Angolans had been killed. Two million more had been driven from their homes. The countryside was scorched and the economy in ruins. Angola has gone from being the breadbasket of Africa to producing almost nothing; its sole successful industry is the manufacture of artificial limbs. Although in 1991 Angola officially abandoned Communism (the United States recognized the MPLA government soon afterward), its overnight transition to a market economy has done little to bolster living conditions. The only difference most Angolans notice is that they no longer get free education or healthcare.

For the mostly foreign elite, though, Angolan-style capitalism provides a warm welcome. Although prices are astronomical—a basic one-bedroom flat can cost twice what it would in London or New York, and the electricity and water go out several times a day—most company employees have all their expenses paid, and generators cushion the inconvenience of power outages. While some foreigners live along the palm-lined Marginal, Luanda's crumbling waterfront promenade, the oil companies maintain separate walled compounds of suburban-style houses for their employees on the outskirts of the city. Most foreign workers,

Daphne Eviatar writes frequently about development. She went to Angola as a Pew fellow in international journalism.

including US Embassy employees, earn more money in Angola than they would almost anywhere else, due to extra "hardship payments." And while just a few years ago there was nothing to buy, a new sporting-goods store filled with Nike products and a Range Rover dealership have opened downtown.

For those willing to leave their homes, Luanda can be fun. Every Friday afternoon the US Embassy hosts a happy hour. Afterward, mostly American and South African embassy workers and businessmen head for the Ilha—a skinny strip of land that juts out into Luanda Bay. There, oceanfront cafes like Miami Beach and Coconuts offer Portuguese wine and South African beer, Brazilian cocktails and a dozen different preparations of prawns, an Angolan delicacy. After a gourmet dinner, expats will hit Bahia, a tasteful open-air Brazilian nightclub, or one of Luanda's all-night dance spots, where middle-aged foreign businessmen have their pick of young Angolan prostitutes.

Much of the fuel for this enclave of opulence comes from California-based ChevronTexaco. Pumping 60 percent of Angola's oil—more than half of which is exported to the United States—the company expects to double its oil production there by 2008. "Angola has been a terrific place to do business," Jim Blackwell, the director of ChevronTexaco's operations in Angola, told me. That's because the horrors of Angola's civil war never really touched ChevronTexaco, which pumps most of its oil from platforms far out in the ocean.

To understand exactly how that works, I went to visit the company's compound, known as Malongo, in Cabinda—the only part of Angola most ChevronTexaco workers ever see. (Although some stay at Malongo, others are ferried by helicopter out to massive steel oil platforms in the ocean, where they spend twenty-eight days before being shuttled back home.) Built in the 1960s, Malongo is a campus of ranch houses, manicured green lawns and smooth paved roads. ChevronTexaco's own well and private filtration system supplies drinkable tap water—a rare luxury in Africa. Spacious dining halls offer a stunning array of fresh seafood, imported meats, salad and dessert bars. The vegetables are all grown in an organic greenhouse on the compound, set up by Norwegians, and bright green Granny Smith apples are flown in from South Africa. For entertainment, there's baseball, basketball, volleyball and tennis, a cricket pitch, horseshoes and a rolling green golf course. Unlike the rest of Angola, where the official language is Portuguese, the language of Malongo is English. If workers still get homesick, they can dial direct from their rooms to the United States—no need for international dialing codes. Indeed, except for the extraordinary bats that hang in ominous clusters from the branches of the compound's mango trees, you'd never know you were in Africa.

ChevronTexaco does everything it can to keep it that way. No one enters or leaves the compound without special permission. And there's no way to avoid the tightly guarded security gates, because the entire compound is surrounded by a double fence of barbed wire that encloses a ring of anti-personnel land mines.

The mines, planted by the government during the war, are just

one manifestation of the longstanding relationship between the Angolan government and the oil company. Gulf Oil, as the company was then known, first discovered oil in Angola's waters in the mid-1960s. Although the ascension of the MPLA scared off most Portuguese investors, the oil operations were largely offshore and therefore untouched by the ensuing bloodshed. Despite the new government's Marxist ideology, it signed a contract granting the American corporation drilling rights. (Gulf Oil became Chevron in 1984, which then merged with Texaco in 2001.) The MPLA played its part by guarding the compound, and used Cuban troops to do it. Back in the United States, though, Ronald Reagan was hailing rebel leader Jonas Savimbi as a "freedom fighter" and funneling millions of dollars to UNITA to support its bloody war

against the Angolan government. As a result, Chevron in the 1980s was in the unlikely position of being an American oil company allied with a Communist government and

guarded by Cuban troops from potential attacks by US-funded rebels. (Mysteriously, the company's compound was never directly attacked, leading to speculation that the United States paid off UNITA to spare the oil operations.)

*For a long time there were no real regulations...
so the government is asking ChevronTexaco
to create them.'*

—Artur Custodio

The government still maintains an armed base on a hill just outside Malongo's gates to coordinate with the company on security. (In addition to local hostility against the oil company, some Cabindans have been waging a separatist campaign against the government for decades, claiming they're not reaping any benefits from Angola's oil, the bulk of which is in their territory.) But the benefits of the company's relationship with the government these days go well beyond security. When I visited, ChevronTexaco officials told me that the company is working closely with the government to develop the environmental, tax and other regulations that will govern, well, ChevronTexaco. "For a long time there were no real regulations in Angola," Artur Custodio, who holds the bold title of "operational excellence champion" for ChevronTexaco, told me as he showed me around Malongo. "So the government is asking ChevronTexaco to create them." The lack of regulations is why ChevronTexaco has flares burning off the natural gas that's produced during oil extraction, and why it can routinely spill oil into the ocean—there were sixty-nine oil spills reported in just the first ten months of 2003—without any public disclosure. (The company does report spills to the government.)

ChevronTexaco nonetheless insists it is a good corporate citizen, and officials were eager to show me the charitable work it does in the area, along with a group of other international oil companies (most significantly the French company Total, the Italian ENI-Agip and of course the Angolan state-owned oil company, Sonangol) that own a share of the fields it operates. Together, the companies have spent about \$24 million on development projects in Cabinda in the past five years. (ChevronTexaco won't reveal its profits in Angola, but the company netted a record \$7.2 billion in 2003 worldwide.) "This is part of our corporate responsibility," said Feliciano Ngada, a spokesperson for ChevronTexaco. "We sit down with the government. They tell us we need a school or a health center. Then they are invited to participate in the opening ceremony." Once the project is built, it bears a large plaque with

the names of its corporate sponsors. That is the end of the companies' involvement. They do not check to make sure the schools are being used or the clinics are staffed or stocked with medicine. "That's the government's responsibility," Ngada told me.

The consequences of that policy became immediately apparent on a daylong tour. As we drove north, we passed villages of broken clapboard shacks, mud-caked barefoot children and the occasional stray chicken. We stopped outside one of those villages to visit a Catholic boys' school where the companies had built a dormitory. At the end of a rugged dirt road was a one-story stucco building, freshly painted creamy white with a brick-red Spanish-tiled roof. But for 10 AM on a Thursday, it was strangely quiet. I asked Padre Policarfo Futi, who runs the mission connected to the school, where all the children were. "The school is closed," he said, smiling at my surprise. "We have no teachers." Indeed, the schools in Cabinda hadn't had teachers for months. They were all on strike because they hadn't been paid by the government.

Later, we drove to see a small health clinic. Francisco de Amaral, a lanky, bearded medical technician in a white lab coat, was inside alone. Where were all the patients? I asked him. "There were some earlier," he said, "but I couldn't do anything for them. We don't have a laboratory, so I can't determine what disease they have. Usually they have symptoms of malaria. But I don't have any medicines for malaria."

The only project I saw that was functioning well was a blood bank funded by the oil companies housed in Cabinda's decrepit municipal hospital. ChevronTexaco has also committed about \$11 million to supporting agricultural projects elsewhere in the country.

Of course, oil companies don't operate in Angola to provide social services. "Our responsibility is to efficiently develop resources in the country for our shareholders and our partners," ChevronTexaco's Blackwell told me. A Louisiana native with a broad, freckled face and reddish-brown hair, dressed in a Levi's shirt and bluejeans, Blackwell oozes corporate American cowboy. "There's an optimism that's capturing the whole country," he said. "We have an opportunity to capture that." To do that, ChevronTexaco has invested more than a billion dollars a year in the country for the past five years, making it one of the company's most significant investments in the world. With the latest deep-water technology giving the company access to ever more reserves of oil, Blackwell and others expect Angola to become Africa's top oil producer—surpassing Nigeria—within five to eight years.

To take advantage of the new technology, it helps to have good relations with the government. The schools and clinics in Cabinda are part of that. So are the contributions by ChevronTexaco to the Eduardo Dos Santos Foundation, ostensibly a charitable foundation run by the president that's long been rumored to be a means for pilfering oil money. More recently, the president's wife has set up a similar organization, supposedly to support disabled Angolans. ChevronTexaco contributes about \$50,000 per year to the Dos Santos Foundation, and has given another \$50,000 to the First Lady's foundation. Blackwell said he was unaware of any concerns about corruption.

But the most widely cited problem in Angola, pointed out not only by advocacy groups but by the World Bank, the IMF and even the US State Department, is that close to a third of the oil revenues that come into the country never make it into the public budget. No one outside the government knows where the money is going. Organizations like Global Witness have documented that at least a billion dollars has ended up in Virgin Islands bank accounts of close associates of the president.

Blackwell doesn't seem to believe the repeated reports about Angola's financial mismanagement. "I think the government's really taking it on the chin with transparency," he said. "My sense is the government is doing the best it can."

Rosa Maria João, a mother of five whom I met as she waited outside a crowded UN-funded health post in a northern *bairro* of the city, doesn't have the same faith. As she cradled her 6-month-old daughter, who was sick with diarrhea and a high fever, the skinny 28-year-old told me she makes a meager living cleaning

homes and washing clothes for Luanda's wealthy. Although she's seen changes in Angola since the end of the war, "they're only for those who have money," she said.

I know the country has a lot of money... But shouldn't at least some of it go into improving people's living conditions? —Rosa Maria João

"For those who don't, there is nothing." Indeed, the government wants to bulldoze the village where she lives—a former refugee camp where residents have built small homes and a school—to make way for new construction. "I know the country has a lot of money from selling petroleum," she said. "The government can keep most of it. But shouldn't at least some of it go into improving people's living conditions?"

Justine Pinto de Andrade, director of the economics department at Catholic University in Luanda, agrees. "You see some buildings that are improved, like Endiama (the state-owned diamond company), Sonangol and De Beers," he said. "But these are not places for the people to live. There is nothing for them." And the expansion of Luanda Sul, with its sprawl of guarded compounds? "Luanda Sul is the opposite of development," Andrade said with irritation. "Sure, it's creating something, but development is creating works for people, like jobs and houses. This is nothing. It's only for rich people who have houses."

The Angolan government's response to such criticism is that its coffers have been drained not by corruption but by the cost of fighting a brutal civil war. "The government is very concerned about social issues," Manuel Nunes Junior, Angola's deputy finance minister, told me. "But Angola had a terrible, terrible war. We need massive international help." Of course, international aid, which totals about \$300 million a year, is dwarfed by the sums paid by oil companies to the government that go missing each year. But Junior denied that the money had been siphoned off. "There is no proof that this money has disappeared," he said. He said the problem is merely that payments made to international creditors by Sonangol, which makes "quasi-official expenditures on behalf of the government," were not recorded in the budget.

Benjamin Castello, director of the Angola chapter of Jubilee 2000, a coalition of advocates focused on debt relief, notes that despite their purported charity work, the oil companies give

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nothing to local pro-democracy organizations, which provide the only hope for holding the government accountable. "Oil companies know that if they support civil society, in the future they won't receive new petrol blocks," he said. (The United States has apparently decided such funding isn't in its interest either: The Agency for International Development has virtually eliminated its prior support for pro-democracy organizations that were critical of the government.) Oil companies are also resisting a campaign initiated by the Open Society Institute and Global Witness, and supported by more than 100 organizations worldwide, that asks companies to publish the payments they make to governments, under the theory that this would make it harder for government officials to steal the money. The companies say it would violate their contracts with the government of Angola and put them at a competitive disadvantage.

The United States has shown no interest in either making demands on oil companies or pressuring the Angolan government. On the contrary, with its interest in diversifying its sources of oil and staying on the right side of one of the most powerful military forces in Africa, Washington is publicly strengthening ties to the MPLA government. In 2002 the Bush Administration welcomed President Dos Santos to the White House, and that same year Secretary of State Colin Powell visited Angola. The United States is now building a mammoth, \$40 million fortified embassy high on a hill overlooking Luanda; a low cement wall across the

road hides the *musseque* built into the slope below. American officials say they prefer a carrot rather than a stick approach. "It's a partnership," said a senior US Embassy official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Angola can be a force for democracy, stability and economic development. It could be one of the wealthiest countries on the continent."

Hoping investors will see it that way, the Angolan government is beginning to talk about changing its ways. It has said, for example, that it will publish a complete budget that includes all of the state oil company's expenditures. But it won't allow any independent auditing, so if the private oil companies continue to hide payments, there will be no way to verify the government's revenues.

In the meantime, conditions for most Angolans continue to worsen. In 2002, despite the war's end and an increase in oil profits, Angola slid down the UN's Human Development Index, compared with the three years before. According to a recent report by Human Rights Watch, spending on social programs is now less than 3.5 percent of the national budget—significantly lower even than in neighboring Chad, Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

For Angola's elite, though, things are looking up. Shortly before I left in November, the Council of Ministers had just declared its support for a \$600 million project to build two brand-new islands in Luanda Bay. They would boast a shopping mall, luxury hotels, apartments, restaurants and casinos. ■

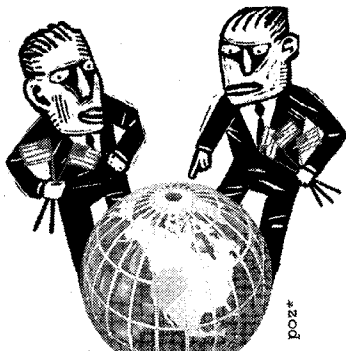
THE NEOCONS HAVEN'T GIVEN UP ON 'REGIME CHANGE' IN IRAN. DON'T COUNT THEM OUT.

Still Dreaming of Tehran

ROBERT DREYFUSS AND LAURA ROZEN

The Bush Administration's hawks and their neoconservative allies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and *The Weekly Standard* are engaged in a high-risk and high-stakes effort to restore their fading power in Washington by pressing for a confrontation with Iran. It's no secret that the neocons' star has fallen since the war with Iraq. The intelligence scandal plaguing the White House and the ongoing crisis in Iraq itself can both be laid at their doorstep, and it's widely believed that President Bush's re-election team would dearly like to extricate the President from the Iraqi tar baby.

But the neocons aren't giving up, and they are trying to pull the White House in even deeper. Not only are they undeterred by the chaos in Iraq, but they are pressing ahead to advance their regional strategy, one that calls for regime change in Iran, then Syria and Saudi Arabia. Says Chas Freeman, who served as US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War and a leading foe of the neocons, "It shows that they possess a level of fanati-



cism, or depth of conviction, that is truly awesome. There is no cognitive dissonance there."

What makes the neocon strategy on Iran especially risky is that with Iraq teetering on the brink of civil war, neighboring Iran has significant clout inside Iraq, including ties to various Iraqi Shiite factions and a growing paramilitary and intelligence presence. If Iran chooses, it can help ease the daunting task that the United States faces in trying to put together a sovereign Iraqi government. But if it seeks confrontation, it can help spark an anti-US revolt in southern Iraq, home to most of Iraq's Shiite majority. In that case, nearly all analysts agree, the American occupation could be overwhelmed.

Leading the charge against Iran is AEI's Michael Ledeen, perhaps best known for setting in motion the US-Israeli arms deal with Iran in the mid-1980s that became known as Iran/*contra*. Supporting Ledeen's position are two other AEI fellows: Richard Perle, the ringleader of the neocons and a former member of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, and David Frum, a *Weekly Standard* contributing editor and the former White House speechwriter who coined the phrase "axis of evil." In their new book, *An End to Evil*, Perle and Frum call for a covert operation to "over-

Robert Dreyfuss is a contributing editor to *The Nation*. Laura Rozen covers national security issues from Washington.

throw the terrorist mullahs of Iran.” Speaking to retired US intelligence officers in McLean, Virginia, in January, Ledeen called Iran the “throbbing heart of terrorism” and urged the Bush Administration to support revolutionary change. “Tehran,” he said, “is a city just waiting for us.”

Ledeen is viewed skeptically by many experts, including at the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency. “Ledeen doesn’t know anything about Iran,” says Juan Cole, a professor at the University of Michigan who is an expert on the Shiites of Iran and Iraq. “He doesn’t speak Persian, and I believe he has never been there.” But Ledeen does have connections in the Iranian exile community. For the past two years, he has maintained a relationship with Manucher Ghorbanifar, the Iranian wheeler-dealer who worked closely with him in Iran/contras. Ledeen introduced Ghorbanifar to a key neoconservative official, Harold Rhode, a longtime Pentagon staffer who speaks Arabic, Farsi, Turkish and Hebrew and who until recently served in Iraq as a liaison between the Defense Department and Ahmad Chalabi. Rhode and another Pentagon official, Larry Franklin, have been talking to Ghorbanifar about options for regime change in Tehran. “They were looking at getting introduced to alleged sources inside Iran, who could give them some inside information on the struggles in Iran,” said Vince Cannistraro, a former CIA counterterrorism chief. Ghorbanifar, he said, was spinning tall tales about alleged (but unsubstantiated) transfers of Iraqi uranium to Iran’s nuclear weapons program.

Rhode and Franklin were critical players in the campaign for war against Iraq. In 2002 they helped organize the Pentagon’s Office of Special Plans, the Iraq war-planning unit whose intelligence staffers are now under investigation by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for allegedly manipulating evidence about Iraq’s nonexistent weapons of mass destruction and ties to terrorism. Both the OSP and the Rhode-Franklin effort on Iran were run out of the office of Douglas Feith, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and a key neocon ally. Their initiative on Iran reportedly drew a sharp protest from the State Department. *Newsday* quoted a US official who said that the entire effort was designed to “antagonize Iran so that they get frustrated and then by their reactions harden US policy against them.”

There is widespread disagreement about both Iran’s intentions in Iraq and the extent of its capability to cause mischief there. But there is a consensus that Iran can exercise significant power. It has close ties to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, whose Badr Brigade paramilitary force of about 10,000 was trained by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, and to the forces of Muqtada al-Sadr, a 30-year-old Shiite firebrand. “There are thousands of Iranian intelligence agents and operational agents inside Iraq today, and the border is completely open,” says Amatzia Baram, an Israeli expert on Iraq.

So far, analysts say, Iran has chosen to play a waiting game. Ken Katzman of the Congressional Research Service says that Iran “views its interest to play it low-key, to keep a low profile and continue to promote a cohesive Shiite bloc in Iraq in order to be in a position to become dominant once the United States leaves.”

The “realists” inside the Bush Administration, led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Coalition Provisional Authority head Paul Bremer in Iraq, are well aware that Iran could deal a fatal blow to the already faltering US efforts. Partly as a result, they’ve engaged in a quiet dialogue with Tehran. According to the *Financial Times*, last May Iran offered a “road map” for normalizing US-Iranian relations. Since then, Powell and his allies have sent assistance after the devastating earthquake in southeast Iran, and offered to send a delegation led by Senator Elizabeth Dole. They’ve also supported efforts by Germany, France and Britain to work a deal with Iran over its nuclear weapons program. (Germany’s intelligence service also brokered a prisoner exchange between Israel and Hezbollah, which is close to Iran.) But of late, some of those conciliatory efforts have stalled. A planned Congressional staff delegation to Tehran, the first since the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini’s regime in 1979, was canceled by the Iranians, according to the office of Senator Arlen Specter, whose staff was to participate. And after the initial harmony, signs are emerging of a serious split between Washington and Europe over Iran’s nuclear program, with echoes of the US-Europe split over Iraqi WMD.

How the differing approaches—the neocons’ war cries and the realists’ more conciliatory strategy—are viewed by Iran’s leadership is anybody’s guess. But there are at least several factors that might push the Iranian ruling elite

‘Tehran is a city just waiting for us.’

—Michael Ledeen, leader of the anti-Iran forces in Washington

in the direction of the confrontation the neocons want. First, the hard-line clergy are in the midst of a crisis with the so-called reformists. In the past, the mullahs have used anti-US rhetoric, and even militant actions, to trump liberal and reformist rivals. Second, while Iran welcomes the rise of Shiite power in Iraq, it is at the same time uneasy about losing influence to the mullahs in Najaf and Karbala. According to several experts on Shiism, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is now the leading Shiite cleric in the world, which could make him a rival to Iran’s less prestigious clerics. Though Sistani has foiled US policy in Iraq by insisting on direct elections, he has refused to denounce the US occupation and may cooperate with a UN-brokered compromise for creating an Iraqi government. “Sistani is a double-edged sword for Iran,” says Juan Cole. And third, there is the Bush factor. Some neoconservative strategists argue that Iran will act decisively in order to prevent Bush from being re-elected. Raymond Tanter, a scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a pro-Israel think tank, predicts, “They are going to launch a political-military campaign in an effort to defeat President Bush, because they believe that if Bush is re-elected, he will do to them what he did to Iraq.”

It’s unclear that Iran would risk a confrontation with the United States in Iraq even if the mullahs do believe that they are next on Bush’s invasion list. But the mullahs are famous for misunderstanding US politics, just as Americans have failed repeatedly to understand Iran’s.

In a way, the neocons’ Iran project is very similar to the early phase of their Iraq one. It includes a steady drumbeat of threats and warnings, Washington lobbying, a media offensive and support for exile groups—in Iran’s case a mishmash that combines supporters of Khomeini’s grandson; Reza Pahlavi, the son of the fallen Shah, and the Iranian monarchists; and the Mujaheddin e-Khalq (MEK),

a 3,800-strong exile force based in Iraq. In one of the strangest events ever to occur at a Washington think tank, last September Khomeini's grandson—dressed in rough-hewn black and brown robes and crowned by a turban, with dark brooding eyes like his grandfather's—took the podium at AEI, introduced by Michael Ledeen, to call for US assistance to overthrow the Iranian government. He even welcomed an alliance with the Pahlavi monarchists.

Many analysts view the prospects of a Pahlavi-Khomeini-MEK alliance with exceeding skepticism. And they note that the neocons, having bungled Iraq, don't have a lot of credibility left on Middle East policy. But it would be wrong to count them out. A

former CIA officer who took part in the debate over Iraq policy in the 1990s recalls how the neocons ultimately prevailed. "The neocons had this idea of working with the Iraqi opposition to arm and train them and to overthrow Saddam Hussein, and people like me said, 'That is really stupid,'" he says. "But you get people to think about it, you get the President engaged, then options expand and then when opportunities come along, you seize them. That's what they did. They got people to buy in. Before September 11, people told them, 'It's never going to happen.' Come September 12, the rules changed." An explosion in Iraq, and some Iranian mischief there, and the rules could change again. ■

Letter From Algeria

by Jack Brown

The winter rains in western Algeria brought a strange harvest to the village of Sidi M'hamed-Benaouda.

When the water receded from a field in this village in the mountains between Algiers and Oran, it carried away a layer of dirt covering the bones of one or more people who had been kidnapped by a government-sponsored militia almost a decade ago.

A lot of bones are probably going to be found in Algeria in the coming years. Somewhere between 4,000 and 10,000 people were disappeared by the government and its minions during the appalling civil war that consumed the country during the 1990s.

In the beginning, public sympathy favored the regime's opponents; the poor and much of the middle class thought new leaders would shake up the system, reduce corruption and afford them new economic opportunities. But the increasing violence and greed of the Islamist armed groups that sprang up in suburbs and rural areas alienated the middle class, and as their support eroded, the armed groups drifted into irrational and self-defeating behavior.

By the middle of the decade, the government was fighting off a shadowy Islamist insurgency that butchered tens of thousands of innocents and eventually pronounced Algerian society as a whole to be unbelievers and worthy of execution. But along the way to winning the war against an execrable enemy, the Algerian state did and permitted things that are unforgivable, and until recently, unspeakable.

Ten thousand people don't disappear without leaving many relatives behind, and the mothers and wives and sons of Algeria's disappeared are organizing. They hope to use the occasion of the first presidential elections since the civil war ground to an ambiguous halt, to be held on April 8, to force the state to acknowledge its role in the disappearances. Last year President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who is running for a second term, announced that he was forming a new commission to investigate the thousands of cases documented by local groups.

Jack Brown (jack@jackbrown.us) is a writer living in Mexico.

FIRST CLASS

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Activists have little faith that the new commission will display any more teeth than the one it replaces, and they note the absurdity of the regime's appointing commissions to investigate disappearances. The commission's true purpose, they say, is to reduce pressure for real, independent investigations. There is almost no democratic opposition in Algeria—the election is expected to be a competition between the two men now trying to nail down the nomination of the former governing party, Bouteflika and former Prime Minister Ali Benflis. Parliament member and presidential candidate Louisa Hanoune and her relatively small Workers Party are one of the few groups in Parliament seen as a genuine opposition party; not coincidentally, she has been one of the few real voices for reconciliation with the vanquished Islamists and for recognition of the vanished victims of the war.

When the bones sprouted in the fields of Sidi M'hamed-Benaouda, villagers knew whom to call: Hadj Smain, a local bureaucrat and veteran of the independence war who is a regional leader in Algeria's disappeared movement. Smain's greatest fear was that the bones would be turned over to the military and vanish without a trace.

And so one bleak December morning Smain stood in a little room in a dirty building in downtown Algiers in front of a small crowd of newspaper journalists and pushed the PLAY button on a VCR. There it was: jerky footage of bleached bones emerging from loose soil. The footage was amateurish, the video camera clearly new to the cameraman. But when Smain stopped the tape, leaned over the plastic shopping bag by his feet and pulled out the rotted woolen cloak of one of the victims, it was the gesture of a born showman, bringing the stink of premature death into the room.

By the time he wheeled out, red-eyed and shaking, the son of the man whose bones had fallen from the decaying cloak it was clear—Smain had something of a bombshell on his hands.

The son, Ahmed Saidane, fumbled with the pockets of the cloak and withdrew a dirty yellowish cigarette lighter. "I remember as if it were today," he said later. "The night before the militia came and took my father, we were both trying to connect gas

to the stove, and we needed a lighter. I remember that yellow lighter my father had. I remember how he put it in his pocket."

The Algerian press didn't really do the announcement justice—a few paragraphs buried in the back pages—but it did not go without notice. It was, at least, an opening for a national discussion of the way Algeria and other regimes defeated Islamist uprisings.

American officials have held the Algerian regime up as an example of how to fight the terrorist menace. During a visit to the country in 2002, the State Department's counterterrorism chief called Algeria "one of the most tenacious and faithful partners of the United States." Tenacious it might have been, but a closer look at the regime's recent history shows the kind of brutal methods American officials are willing to countenance in the name of fighting terrorism.

There was a period in the 1990s when it was by no means clear that the Algerian state was going to hold out against the Islamists. Portions of the country had essentially been abandoned by the army, and Western observers had begun preparing for what seemed to be an inevitable switch to another "fundamentalist state" in this OPEC country of 33 million.

At the beginning of the decade, a majority of voters had picked the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), an Islamist political party that appropriated much of the symbolism of Algeria's war for independence but promised to cure the country's ills with the Koran. The military, always the real power behind the facade of the National Liberation Front government, "interrupted" the electoral process, jailed the FIS leaders, replaced the president and eventually banned the party.

The inevitable cycle of arrests and repression followed by violence sent many of the FIS sympathizers into the ranks of armed revolutionary groups, which started by killing policemen and soldiers but gradually moved to indiscriminate bombings and murdering whole villages with knives.

The state lost control in places, effectively ceding power to the militants until it hit upon the strategy of forming "self-defense" groups, often headed by veterans of the independence war. Arming the villages proved to be an effective, although ultimately extremely bloody, way of reasserting control. Survivors frequently implicated the paramilitaries in forced disappearances and massacres.

One story has a rural paramilitary leader who found his mother and father murdered taking his revenge through the town of Boufarik, knocking on the doors of known Islamists, including the aged father of one Antar Zouabri, and shooting them on the spot. Zouabri went on to fame—and, like all his predecessors, to violent death at the hands of security forces—as head of the Armed Islamic Group, the most brutal of all Algeria's Islamist armies. Whether the murder had anything to do with Zouabri's later madness—which included directing the murder of 400 villagers in one particular night and finally announcing that he had excommunicated the entire country—is debatable, but the story illustrates how the cycle of civil violence was partially escalated by the introduction of paramilitaries into the villages.

The bones that Hadj Smain pulled from that decaying cloak

in Sidi M'hamed-Benaouda tell a similar tale. Score-settling and greed by armed groups in a vacuum of state power played a role in many disappearances.

Ahmed Saidane says his family was not Islamist. His father was killed, he says, because he'd accused a local mayor of embezzling money from his town. The mayor unfortunately did side work as head of the government's antiterrorist militia, and on the morning of September 9, 1996, the militia came for Abed Saidane.

"Fear," Algerian Prime Minister Redha Malek said after a particularly vicious Islamist attack in 1993, "must change sides." And indeed it did. But it often fell on the backs of men like Djamil Fahassi, a moderate Islamist and radio reporter for a state broadcaster, who was twice imprisoned, in 1991 and 1992, for publishing articles the government deemed threatening or libelous to the army.

Even the victims who did engage in revolutionary politics were often the least deserving of violent repression. The tragedy of many of the Islamists who were snatched by security forces and paramilitaries is that they were trying to play by the rules: They didn't "go to the mountains," as Algerians say. They stayed in their cities and towns and tried to enact their radical program without violence.

Each time he was released, Fahassi returned from the desert prison camps to his job in Algiers. One day in 1995 he went out, leaving his wife and infant daughter, and never came home. He was picked up, witnesses say, in a police sweep. His wife, Safia, has campaigned unceasingly for his release ever since.

Safia, young, attractive, a teacher and fluent speaker of French and English, became a visible spokeswoman for the disappeared movement. She believes that the disappeared will forever haunt the state's supposed victory in the war against the Islamists.

"The mistake of the government is that in order to fight the terrorists, they did what a terrorist would have done," she said. "But the state, with its institutions, cannot do what the terrorists do. Until the disappearances are admitted and the survivors are released, this war will not end."

Safia believes, perhaps improbably, that her husband is still alive, and speaks of government sources who tell her he's being held in a military prison in Blida.

"They cannot kill everybody," she said. "The missing are about 10,000 people. The number is terrible. If they have just killed all of them, it's craziness."

But craziness and a sense of near hopelessness drove the disappearances, and it seems likely that if the disappeared are ever found, it will be in unmarked graves in places like Sidi M'hamed-Benaouda.

During his last election campaign (which he won easily after all the other candidates withdrew the night before the election), President Bouteflika was accosted onstage by a number of mothers of the disappeared.

"I can't just pull the disappeared out of my pocket," he shouted, enraged at their temerity in raising the issue. If Hadj Smain and others keep pulling them out of bags, though, their survivors won't be so easily dismissed this time. ■

'The mistake of the government is that in order to fight the terrorists, they did what a terrorist would have done.' —Safia Fahassi, a teacher

EXCHANGE

CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

leaf for depriving Israeli Jews of their basic civil and human rights in a new Arab state. In this regard, it is anti-Jewish discrimination, satisfying standard definitions of anti-Semitism as a form of racism against Israeli Jews.

Second, in those cases where Western leftists advocate a vague, naïve anti-Zionist binationalism—where their intent is not to subordinate Israeli Jews in an Arab state but to express an idealistic commitment to egalitarianism and post-nationalism as a practical program for Jews and Palestinians here and now—the real-world effect of their beguiling fantasy is to lend aid and comfort to coercive binationalism. Their blandishments stoke the frenzy of resistance to genuine two-state peace efforts, accelerating the transformation of Israel into a pariah state, fueling the campaign to realize a malign binationalist nightmare. Such misbegotten noble intentions will help pave the road to perdition, bolstering the Israeli right, feeding Jewish fear and paranoia and Arab chauvinist triumphalism. If successful, they will sweep Israelis and Palestinians down to the next rung of the raging Middle Eastern inferno, engulfing them in the great and intimate flames of civil war.

GIDON D. REMBA
President, Chicago Peace Now

KLUG REPLIES

Oxford, England

■ Gidon Remba has written a thoughtful and thought-provoking critique of my essay. Unlike several letters I received, he does not accuse me of aiding and abetting anti-Semitism. However, he thinks that my analysis tends to undermine the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This solution, according to Remba, is the only way to avoid engulfing the two peoples in “the great and intimate flames of civil war.” Thus, on his account, my “zealous effort” to rebut the authors I discuss harms the cause of peace.

Remba is especially concerned with “the Western left.” He points out that anti-Semitism is not the prerogative of the ultra-nationalist right; there is a tradition on the left that goes back to “some of the Enlightenment’s founders.” He is right; from Voltaire on, there have been leading representatives of liberal, socialist and anarchist traditions who were anti-Semites. But I am not arguing that left-wing sentiment against Israel or Zionism today is always free of the taint of anti-Semitism. It isn’t; and sometimes the “socialism of fools” (August Bebel) turns into the “anti-imperialism of fools,” as Mick Hume recently argued in the *New Statesman*. But honest, principled opposition to Israel on the left is not, in itself, anti-Semitic. And in the absence of evidence, we have no right to assume that the taint of bigotry is present.

This is not to exonerate the anti-Zionist left, which, without being anti-Semitic, can “sin” in other ways. I am thinking, for example, of the way some people on the left seem to forget that

Zionism, for all its failings, was a reaction to anti-Semitism. Jews had been marginalized, excluded and finally almost annihilated in Europe. When people on the left seem oblivious to this history, when they fold the Jewish story into a larger narrative of European imperialism in the Middle East, Jews—including non-Zionist Jews—are liable to feel, with some justification, that they are being marginalized and excluded all over again. Moreover, when left-wing critics of Israel speak loosely of “Jewish influence,” without taking care to qualify their statements, they can give the impression that all Jews are somehow implicated in the machinations of a few, thus feeding an anti-Semitic current in the wider culture. These offenses, and others like them, need to be exposed. But they should be called by their specific names and not branded “anti-Semitism.”

This brings me to the argument at the center of Remba’s critique. It comes to this: (1) Binationalists “often propose” a unitary state in which Jews would be “at best a tolerated, subjugated minority.” (2) This political arrangement is a form of wrongful discrimination against Jews. (3) So, such a proposal is anti-Semitic.

The first premise strikes me as tendentious. But even granting the two premises, it does not follow that binationalism (or the kind that Remba calls “coercive”) is anti-Semitic. Remba uses a much broader definition of “anti-Semitism” than I do, and then puts it to political use. Drawing on an edition of Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, he holds that wrongful discrimination against Jews is, by definition, anti-Semitic. But dictionaries can deceive. According to the same publisher’s unabridged edition, “opposition to Zionism” and “sympathy with opponents of the state of Israel” are also, by definition, anti-Semitic (Third New International Dictionary). But are they? Remba himself doesn’t think so. He agrees with me, contrary to Webster’s, that anti-Zionism “is not inherently anti-Semitic.” The moral is clear: It is unwise to rely on dictionaries to do our thinking for us.

Dictionary definitions of anti-Semitism tend to be too general to do justice to the concept. Anti-Semitism, as I said in my essay, involves a particular discourse about Jews. You could also call it a doctrine, an image, a stereotype, an ideology or, in the words of noted Holocaust scholar Helen Fein, “a persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs.” The crucial point is that anti-Semitism has a specific content. It conjures up “the Jew” as someone with a certain set of traits: cunning, powerful, materialistic, legalistic, parasitic, rootless and so on. This set of traits has remained more or less constant for centuries. Thus, while “anti-Semitism” is a relatively new word, the idea it denotes is longstanding.

Moreover, belief in this idea is immune to empirical evidence. Remba, I believe, is wrong about traditional hatred of Jews in Europe. The logic of anti-Semitism does not work like this: “The Rothschilds are powerful and exploitive, hence Jews in general are.” But more like this: “Jews are powerful and exploitive, just look at

the Rothschilds.” In other words, anti-Semites do not generalize from instances. They are predisposed to see Jews in a certain negative light, which is why I call their prejudice “a priori.” But when alienated Moroccan and Algerian youths in the *banlieues* of Paris, outraged by conditions in the occupied territories, attack Jewish individuals and institutions, the situation is essentially different. This is not, as some say, a new “mutation” of an old “virus.” Fundamentally, it is an ethno-religious conflict between two communities with opposed identifications: roughly, French Muslims with Palestinian Arabs versus French Jews with Israeli Jews.

Certainly, as I indicated in my essay, anti-Semitism is part of the “mix.” But it is not the driving force. For this reason, while such incidents should be condemned, it is misleading to classify them as anti-Semitic. My view is not as “idiosyncratic” as Remba thinks. The EUMC, a racism monitoring agency of the European Union, recognized this problem when it withheld a report on anti-Semitism prepared on its behalf. Werner Bergmann, one of the two authors of the study, has frankly acknowledged that EUMC officials “expressed discomfort with the study’s broad definition of anti-Semitism, which included some anti-Israel behavior.” (The president of the World Jewish Congress, Edgar Bronfman, said the decision to withhold the report was itself anti-Semitic, which only illustrates how that word is abused.)

In a way, what does it matter how the word is defined? Couldn’t we just decide to apply it across the board wherever Jews, as Jews, are under attack, regardless of the reasons? We could. But as Wittgenstein remarks, “Say what you choose, so long as it does not prevent you from seeing the facts.” There’s the rub. When the word “anti-Semitism” is used broadly and loosely, we lose sight of the facts. We are unable to distinguish between the various factors that explain animosity toward Israel and the associated climate of hostility toward Jews; and if we cannot identify the causes, we will fail to see solutions. We are blinded by the word, partly because it is so emotive, partly because its connotations are so strong and partly because some partisans of Israel and Zionism exploit these qualities to shut down opponents. The semantic question has been politicized. This is why the definition matters. It is time to reclaim the word “anti-Semitism” from the political misuses to which it is being put.

Having just read Avraham Burg’s eloquent plea for the Geneva accords in the Beirut paper *Al Hayat*, I wish to say to Gidon Remba, man of Peace Now: *Gai gezunterhait*—go in good health! Make your argument as forcefully as you can. But don’t, in your zealous efforts on behalf of the two-state solution, bludgeon your opponents with the club of “anti-Semitism.” First, it won’t work. Second, it does harm. Perhaps binationalism is wrongheaded. Nonetheless, it is a legitimate view. Calling a legitimate view “anti-Semitic” does not delegitimize that view. It tends to legitimize anti-Semitism. BRIAN KLUG

COMMENT

(Continued From Page 7)

rael's government-owned Channel 1 News, reported that Hamas and Yasir Arafat's Fatah had been on the verge of signing a co-operation agreement that would have led to joint control of Gaza's security apparatus in the wake of an Israeli pullout. The Israelis feared that if this were to occur, Washington would call a halt to the assassination of Hamas leaders. So the killing of Yassin may have been designed as much to pre-empt these developments as to avenge the Ashdod bombing.

If Yassin's assassination triggers an earthquake of revenge, Sharon is willing to pay the price—indeed, it might even shore up his popularity among Israel's battered, frightened citizens. A wave of suicide attacks would bolster Sharon's efforts to frame the conflict as a war against Islamic terrorists rather than one between occupier and occupied—and to continue with the project most dear to him, the colonization of the West Bank (where he wants to transfer the Gaza settlers) and the creation of a 400-mile wall that carves up Palestinian land into an archipelago of prisonlike cantons, divided from one another and cut off from their natural resources.

There may be another casualty of the assassination: the remarkable flowering of nonviolent resistance to Israel's wall. Over the past six weeks Palestinians, led by older veterans from the first intifada; and Israeli activists have joined in protests in villages near the wall, facing ferocious assaults from the Israeli army—an attempt, it would seem, to transform nonviolent resistance into rioting and to discourage wider participation. From Sharon's vantage point, nothing could be more menacing than the emergence of a nonviolent movement of civil disobedience, particularly one in which Jews and Arabs work together.

Yassin's killing can only reinforce the intercommunal, religious dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with repercussions that are profoundly alarming not only for Israelis and Palestinians but for those beyond the region. As veteran Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery put it, "This is the beginning of a new chapter.... It moves the conflict from the level of solvable national conflict to the level of religious conflict, which by its very nature is insoluble." Yassin was a revered cleric throughout the Muslim world, and his death has enraged millions not only against Israel but against Washington, its indispensable patron; in Iraq, the pre-eminent Shiite leader Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani condemned the assassination as "an ugly crime against the Palestinian people" and protesters in Mosul chanted, "Do not worry, Palestine. Iraq will avenge the assassination of Sheik Yassin." Hamas has indicated for the first time that it also holds America directly responsible for the killing of its leaders. It is also worth recalling that when Israel killed Hezbollah leader Sheik Abbas Musawi in a similar helicopter gunship attack, revenge came not in Israel but in Argentina, where Shiite militants

bombed the Israeli Embassy, killing twenty-nine. The US government must not merely urge "restraint"—its timorous response to Yassin's killing—but prevent its Israeli ally from leading the region into catastrophe.

ROANE CAREY AND ADAM SHATZ

The Deaning of America



Does Dean for America have a second act? That's the question a lot of people have been asking after the collapse of Howard Dean's presidential campaign. Not so much because they're interested in the former Vermont governor's personal trajectory but because something unusual just happened in American politics: A couple of hundred thousand people put their hearts, minds, mousepads and checkbooks together and drove an insurgent to the center of the political process. In doing so, they forced the rest of the Democratic field to adopt their message, style and values. Perhaps even more important, they got a taste of their own power. "We all felt the muscle flex of this new progressive movement and were stunned by it," Nicco Mele, Dean's webmaster, told me recently at the Politics Online conference at George Washington University. "Everybody wants to carry that forward."

But no one knows exactly how. Maverick populist candidates always generate important ripple effects—like the many black mayors elected in the wake of Jesse Jackson's 1988 run. But it's awfully hard to bottle political lightning. John Anderson didn't even try after his 1980 independent run, leaving his supporters orphaned. Jackson actively discouraged the continuation of vibrant grassroots-driven Rainbow Coalition state chapters after 1988, preferring to centralize control in what became little more than a leadership PAC. Jerry Brown's 800-number callers and \$100 donors (he refused to take more) were never knitted into anything after 1992. Ross Perot drew about 1.5 million dues-paying members into United We Stand America in 1993, but then his authoritarian leadership—Congressional district coordinators couldn't even get a list of phone numbers of local supporters out of Dallas—rapidly drove that group into the dust.

But this time, there's a new ingredient: the Internet and all the capacities for bottom-up and lateral networking it offers. "The cat is out of the bag," says Scott Heiferman, CEO of MeetUp.com, the social software tool used so effectively by Dean to bring together tens of thousands of supporters. "The people have it in their brains that they can organize themselves." Not only that; both by design and by accident, Dean's core staff really did share a lot of power with their base. If you want to find out who in your ZIP code signed up as a Dean supporter, you can get many of their names at Deanlink and even send them an e-mail. If you want to post an announcement about an upcoming event, you can freely comment on Dean's blog. No major campaign in US history, to my knowledge, has ever ceded this much control to its base.

Thus, to glimpse where all this goes next, you have to look beyond the efforts of a few leaders and wade through a sea of Dean-inspired activist networks that are basically hubs of independent Democratic activism. For example, the network of Dean's house-party coordinators is deciding whom they'll raise money for now:

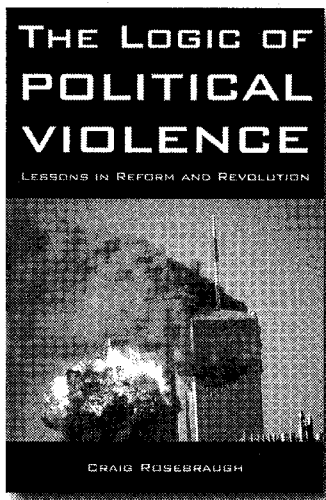
ON THE WEB: Christian Parenti interviews US Army deserter Camilo Mejia, who says he has come to believe that "this is an immoral, unjust and illegal war." Also: Bill Weinberg on political violence in Colombia and Katrina vanden Heuvel on Air America (www.thenation.com).

COMMENT

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John Kerry, the DNC, local candidates or 527s. At MyVoteIsMyVoice.com, activists are putting together a summertime "Dean-fest" for thousands of progressives around the Democratic convention in Boston. Britt Blaser, an open-source developer, is assembling a nonprofit, Open Republic, to collect and refine the movement's innovative tools, the better to assist lower-level candidates. If anything, the biggest problem for these post-Dean ripples is coordinating their efforts without a strong center guiding them.

It's too soon to say if Dean, or his visionary campaign manager, Joe Trippi, will be able to play that role. Trippi was first out of the gate, announcing Change for America, a follow-on effort, at the beginning of February. But so far, apart from launching a lively weblog and gathering a couple of dozen core Dean staffers at his Maryland farm for a weekend of brush-clearing and manifesto-drafting, he hasn't taken any formal steps. A promised series of citizen summits in major cities has been delayed.

Then there's Dean himself, who has just announced the creation of Democracy for America, complete with a website and blog, which looks very much like his old campaign. Dean has promised to travel the country promoting grassroots politics and progressive candidates and has already announced partnerships with SEIU and AFSCME (the two major unions that endorsed him), as well as 21st Century Democrats, a group that recruits and trains candidates. But the details are still sparse.

There's evidence that Dean has inspired a wave of new aspirants to public office. Zephyr Teachout, Dean's director of Internet organizing and outreach, told me she's counted at least 100 Dean-inspired candidates running for office, ranging from the Dekalb, Indiana, County Council to Congress. More are popping up each day on a Yahoo! groups list called Democratic Wings, where they share ideas, tactics and resources. These new leaders are a direct outgrowth of Dean MeetUp local coordinating committees that are still active. "The power of the MeetUp model," says Teachout, "is that it generates these steering committees and draws out volunteers with talents, something that never happens with canvassing operations or direct mail."

This suggests that worrying about the lack of a strong center may not matter, as emergent self-activating and self-organizing people may find equally valid ways to knit themselves together. And the bottom-up Dean experience may have taught a whole cohort of activists that politics is more satisfying when you're in the driver's seat. Chris Finnie, a Californian active in a group of several hundred self-described "Dean Leaders," says that having seized the tools and opportunities the campaign presented them with, few are willing to go back to just coughing up money for various causes and candidates. "We've discovered we can do more than that," she says. Recently, she said, she got an e-mail pitch from the Democratic National Committee that rubbed her the wrong way. "They view the Dean campaign as a study in how to use the Internet to raise money from a whole new group of donors. We view it as a tool that empowers people to take back their political voice and power."

MICAH L. SIFRY

Micah L. Sifry (www.iraqwarreader.com), senior analyst with Public Campaign, is the author, with Nancy Watzman, of *Is That a Politician in Your Pocket?*, to be published in July by John Wiley & Sons.

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Water's Edge

JOHN PALATTELLA

WATERFRONT: A Journey Around Manhattan. By Phillip Lopate. Crown. 421 pp. \$25.95.

Manhattan is a tight little island. Around thirteen miles long, it has a width that varies from two miles to a few hundred feet. After centuries of having its shores sculpted by erosion, excavation and landfill, it is a land mass that has acquired on maps the profile of a right whale swimming into the open sea. But this nautical image is too neat, if not another of the city's cruel jokes, since Manhattan is a small island that can often make one feel utterly landlocked. The financial district is formed by granite and glass canyons; in midtown, trade and tourism funnel crowds inland toward Central Park, Times Square and Madison and Park avenues. A tenement roof offers some respite—a vista of sky vaulting a sea of shingle, tin, terra cotta and tar. The soft wails of unseen tugs linger in the air, and the nearest body of water lies in the many cubic yards of upstate reservoir stored in the squat elevated towers cluttering the horizon. From the roof the cables of the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges are visible, but the river they span is not. At night, glittering with tiny lights, the cables dip from their towers into the dark, the extravagant decorations of a street fair for the landlocked.

A glimpse from an airplane or a skyscraper's upper stories reveals a different picture. Wedged between three rivers, Manhattan is part of a large urban archipelago. Of New York City's five boroughs, only the Bronx rests on the continent. Staten Island looms in the southwest, and to the east Brooklyn and Queens blanket the western tip of Long Island. A host of smaller islands dot the harbor and rivers. Liberty Island houses a monument, Rikers a prison. Lesser-known islands like North Brother, once used as quarantines for the criminal and the ill, are now inhabited by birds, insects and mice. Freshwater tributaries feed the rivers that ribbon the islands, which

means that the Manhattan archipelago is bathed by an estuary, a nutrient-rich marine habitat created by the merging of fresh and salt water.

Phillip Lopate explains in *Waterfront* that when he began telling people he was writing about Manhattan's shoreline, "many would get misty-eyed and ask me if I had read *The Bottom of the Harbor* (which of course I had)." It's a legitimate question since few books convey a richer sense of the fecundity of Manhattan's estuary than Joseph Mitchell's work, which contains six

Phillip Lopate strolls along promenades, scrambles over train tracks and slogs through underbrush to detail Manhattan's shoreline.

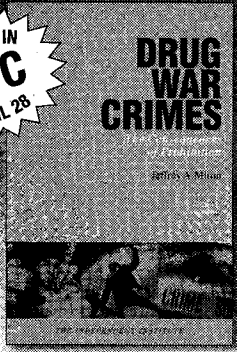
delicate and dazzling portraits of the waterfront that Mitchell published in *The New Yorker* between 1944 and 1959. *The Bottom of the Harbor* is an estuarium, one that elegantly combines, as Lopate acknowledges, "the perspectives of marine biologist, geologist, urbanist, anthropologist, and historian" to explain how the harbor churns together past and present, nature and humanity, predators and prey.

But to get sentimental and imply that Mitchell had already done the job in *The Bottom of the Harbor* is to diminish the importance of Lopate's very different but perceptive and valuable *Waterfront*. Even if he had wanted to, Lopate couldn't have written a book like *The Bottom of the Harbor*, since Mitchell's subject, the culture of New York City's maritime economy, has all but vanished. By the early twentieth century most of the immense oyster beds in the Lower Bay, decimated by overharvesting

John Palatella writes on books and the arts for The Nation, the Los Angeles Times Book Review and the Boston Review.

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and pollution, had been condemned. As for fin fish, they "stopped arriving by water in the early 1970s," Lopate tells us, "partly because New York Harbor was too polluted to supply a local catch (or store it in the river, once caught)," and partly because it was cheaper to truck in refrigerated fish from elsewhere. The biggest economic blow came in the 1960s, with the arrival of container ships, which require deep drafts and fifty acres of backspace for the unloading of cargo, both of which Manhattan lacks. After World War II, the city handled one-third of all foreign cargo shipped to the United States; by the early 1970s, after the maritime trade had drifted westward to the deep waters and acreage of container facilities in Newark, Manhattan's port was all but dead. (The piers in Red Hook, Brooklyn, have remained the home of a few small, vibrant shipping firms.) What was once a shoreline thick with bustling piers, wharves and ferry slips is now a hodgepodge of parks, piers, promenades, luxury apartment buildings, landmarks, housing projects, power plants and parking lots. No wonder, then, that when Lopate examines Manhattan's profile on a map, instead of a right whale he sees "a luxury liner, permanently docked, going nowhere."

his essays. "I am like a worm that prefers to enter a dying organism," Lopate writes in "Memories of Greenwich Village," from his collection *Portrait of My Body*. "It excites my imagination more to take an archival angle on the past than to go where it is 'happening.'" In several essays in the early collection *Bachelorhood*, that angle of vision is sharp but narrow: Lopate describes how seedy, vibrant neighborhoods (such as Times Square and the Upper West Side) began to be transformed or threatened by gentrification in the late 1970s, and his observations, while vivid, are mostly impressionistic.

Lopate refined his archival vision in a novel, *The Rug Merchant*, in which the owner of a sleepy Oriental rug shop on Amsterdam Avenue has his rent tripled by gentrification-happy landlords. The unfashionable shop is a dying organism, one that its owner has for personal reasons maintained in a makeshift way; Cyrus Irani inherited the shop from an uncle, and he had started working there only after the fear of success led him to abandon his doctoral studies in art history. Although Cyrus's store is on Amsterdam Avenue, the distance between it and the shoreline described in *Waterfront* is narrow, since in his new book Lopate is again burrowing into the remains of a local enterprise that for centuries had a makeshift feel. As Lopate notes, the relatively calm waters of New York City's sheltered harbor saved it the expense of building stone piers, and when ships began getting wider and longer, the city opted simply to lengthen its rickety wooden piers instead of replacing them with sturdier, more expensive ones. In *The Rug Merchant* Lopate tells the subtle story of a place's inertia and slow decline; in *Waterfront* he tells a rich and more subtle story about a place's rapid decline followed by equal parts of inertia and transformation.

Inertia: Battery Park City, a cluster of residential, commercial and recreational developments built on ninety-two acres of landfill, part of which was extracted from the excavation of the World Trade Center site in the late 1960s. Because its design severs it from its immediate context (the Wall Street financial district), Battery Park City is, in Lopate's opinion, "something of a transplanted organ that has never quite taken hold." Transformation: the Riverbank State Park, nestled atop a sewage treatment plant on the Hudson between West 137th and West 145th Streets. Harlem residents were understandably outraged when they learned in the late 1970s that the state wanted to build along

Lopate takes us nearly everywhere as he meanders up and down the banks of the Hudson, Harlem and East rivers, from the Battery in the south to Inwood Park in the far north, and from South Street Seaport to Highbridge Park in East Harlem. Strolling along promenades, scrambling over train tracks, slogging through underbrush, squeezing through holes in chain-link fences, Lopate hugs the water's edge as much as possible. Interspersed among the chapters describing these rambles are excursions into the history of the waterfront's architecture, geology, literature and development. Underlying these explorations are several fundamental questions: "What is our capacity for city-making at this historical juncture? How did we formerly build cities with such casual conviction, and can we still come up with bold, integrated visions and ambitious works? What is the changing meaning of public space? How to resolve the antiurban bias in our national character with the need to sustain a vital city environment?"

Waterfront is a vivid blend of history, guidebook, white paper and urban sketch, one that may surprise readers of Lopate's work as a personal essayist. Yet the waterfront is a natural subject for Lopate, since local history has often been a catalyst for

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their neighborhood's western edge a plant for processing the effluents of millions of people. The state's consolation prize was to erect a park atop the plant. Nearly 4 million visitors a year now flock to Riverbank's ballfields, pools, amphitheater and cultural center, Lopate says. (An added attraction: the state finally figured out how to eliminate the plant's stench.) Lopate praises Riverbank's designer, Richard Dattner, for refusing to treat its waterfront location as either the outer edge of residential development patterns or an empty vista for soothing the landlocked. Like Lopate, Dattner resists the island's deeply ingrained habit of turning inland.

During his many decades as an essayist, Lopate has cultivated a prose style that's supple and vigorous enough to tackle diverse tasks, such as tender reminiscence ("The Dead Father: A Remembrance of Donald Barthelme"), sardonic self-revelation ("On Leaving Bachelorhood") or contrarian argument ("Resistance to the Holocaust," an eloquent, sharp-elbowed attack on writers, museums and memorials whose representations of the Holocaust are mired in mystification and kitsch). Writing directly about the waterfront, Lopate had to inventory facts and impressions about scores of physical places. It's a task with no precedent in his other work, and one that he handles deftly by punctuating his lively historical and geographical excursions with colorful bursts of description. The Starrett-Lehigh Building, a blocklong, nineteen-story warehouse near the Hudson River, is a "flapjack stack of fenestration." Ten blocks north sits the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center; with nearly 2 million square feet of space warehoused under a canopy of black glass, it is a "bold lump of coal." The Con Edison power plant on the banks of the East River at 14th Street sprouts "stacks of coiled wire like the laboratory headdress of Elsa Lanchester in *The Bride of Frankenstein*." As for the joggers, cyclists and rollerbladers who dart and glide through Hudson River Park, they are clad in "the global uniforms of the body-snatched, those who have allowed their limbs to be turned over to machines for happiness."

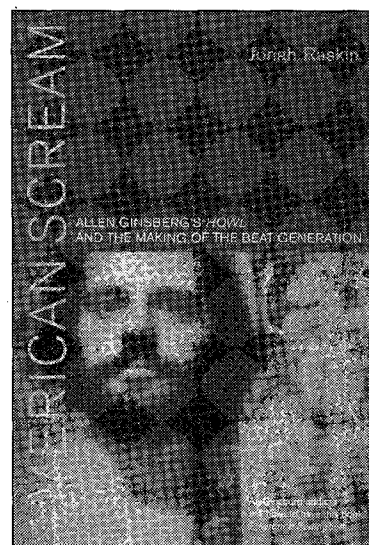
Such growls about the waterfront's temples of finance and sweat should not be mistaken for bohemian sneers. Lopate admits that he recoils from places like Hudson River Park and Chelsea Piers not out of principled urbanist objections to their design but because of "my own estrangement from my body, and my fear and envy of people who celebrate life through their

pores—I who live in my head, looking out at the world as if I were constantly reading a book, while my belly softens and my hair thins." Still, a balding pate can't account for the passages in *Waterfront* that echo *Low Life*, Luc Sante's hip and pungent history of downtown Manhattan's nineteenth-century underbelly. While tracing the boundaries of the old fish market in South Street Seaport, Lopate reminisces about long-gone purveyors of vice who lived by their wits "with improvised cons at the border of legality. In the end, that way of life could not survive here: it fell to the corporations and realtors who call the tune in this city, and who practiced a smoother type of dishonesty, breaking their promise to the fish-dealers." In *Low Life*, Sante presents those nineteenth-century hustlers as the guardian spirits of an urban wilderness, an unfinished Wonder City poisoned in the early twentieth century, and again during the 1980s and '90s, by prosperity and public relations. Sante treats those scruffy spirits as the source of a regenerative myth; they are the protagonists of a morality play about the struggle between flamboyance and sobriety, the irrational and the rational. There is no such struggle in *Waterfront* because, despite being a *flâneur*, Lopate is not a bohemian who romanticizes poverty or marginal classes. He is curious about the waterfront's past shabbiness but not inured to it.

As for principled urbanist opinions about waterfront development, Lopate has a bushel of them. One is a revisionist take on Robert Moses, the master builder of many of New York City's tunnels, expressways, parks, beaches and bridges. Lopate defends Moses against those who, like Jane Jacobs and Marshall Berman, think he was "a monster, the enemy of the good" because he bulldozed through waterfront neighborhoods to build highways. I credit Lopate for his effort, but I think it will take more than a few thousand words, and better arguments than the claim that Moses "accomplished much more good than harm" or that some of the neighborhoods he razed to make way for an expressway "were doomed to change and wither" anyway, to convince thoughtful skeptics that Moses was not an imperious planner indifferent to the plight of the thousands of lower-class folks displaced by his projects.

Much more persuasive is Lopate's carefully researched and gamely argued discussion of Westway—"the road not taken." Announced in 1972, Westway involved a plan to submerge several miles of the West Side Highway in the Hudson River, thereby creating the opportunity to

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build an expansive waterfront park downtown. Better yet, because Westway was to be part of the nation's Interstate system, the federal government would pay for its riverine tunnels. Westway had many opponents in Greenwich Village, which would have been most affected by its construction. After failing to prove that Westway would worsen their neighborhood's air quality, village activists argued that its tunnels would harm marine life, especially striped bass. The state countered that it was willing to do whatever was necessary to ease any impact Westway might have on the fish. Striped bass have adapted to landfill and dredging in the past, Westway's planners argued. Why not now? The courts agreed with the opposition, and Westway was scrapped in 1990.

The Westway chapter shows that, as far as urban planning goes, Lopate is a conservationist. As the architect Nathan Silver explains in *Lost New York*, preservation, through the limited protection and veneration of certain urban forms, keeps change at bay, whereas conservation seeks to accommodate change by cultivating ways of sustaining a certain type of urban milieu, such as an informal, pedestrian culture. Conservation can involve preservation, but preservation can't include conservation. "The battle of Westway was a triumph of People Power over the Establishment," Lopate rightly concludes. "This time, however, the Establishment had the progressive vision and imagination, and the people... dug in their heels." It was a triumph of preservationists over conservationists, of advocates for striped bass over advocates for striped bass and a sprawling park. Westway's legacy, Lopate surmises, is that New York City "is ruled by a fractious civic culture, better suited to stop anything from getting built, than to respond creatively and energetically to the need for fresh urban solutions."

Lopate concludes his book with a survey of such solutions, and even those who quibble about the details or nod off at the slightest whiff of white-paper wonkery will be hard-pressed not to appreciate the most valuable feature of *Waterfront*, Lopate's quicksilver essayistic style. In one of the most exuberant passages of *Low Life*, Luc Sante calls Manhattan "a creature, a mentality, a disease, a threat, an electromagnet, a cheap stage set, an accident corridor. It is an implausible character, a monstrous vortex of contradictions, an attraction-repulsion mechanism so extreme no one could have made it up." Lopate has spent nearly six decades living in that vortex and grappling with its contradic-

tions by cultivating an essayistic style that's lyrical and historical, elegiac and pragmatic, steely and serene, affable and brash. In *Waterfront* Lopate has enriched and re-

fined his style by taking it quite literally to the vortex's watery edge, and for anyone wandering along that shoreline, his book will be a lively and trusty compass. ■

In America

PHILIP CONNORS

WATERBORNE. By Bruce Murkoff. Knopf. 397 pp. \$25.

THE VANISHING MOON. By Joseph Coulson. Archipelago. 330 pp. \$24.

If the words "first novel" and "arrival of a major American talent" appear on the front flap of a dust jacket, you can almost be sure that the picture on the back flap will depict some impossibly lovely product of good breeding and expert dentistry, a sloe-eyed or square-jawed recent graduate of one of the top-tier

creative writing programs, with a face made up to hide the blemishes of acne scars not too distantly inflicted. Big-time publishing is now as enamored of youth as every other aspect of the culture, and aspiring writers seem to be losing their virginity at ever younger ages to an industry that came rather late to the realization that sex can sell mediocre books as well as it sells anything else.

It's something of a surprise, then, to come upon two first novels written by balding guys in their 50s. In addition to this superficial similarity, both books explore the dislocations forced on families touched by tragedy during the Great Depression. Though neither *Waterborne* nor *The Vanishing Moon* is without flaws, each is an ambitious effort that heralds the arrival of an intriguing pentagenarian talent.

In *Waterborne*, Bruce Murkoff steers four characters toward a fateful meeting at the Boulder Dam—later renamed for President Hoover—during its epic building in the 1930s. The first half of the book gives us these characters' histories in alternating strands of flashback; the second half vividly evokes the construction of the dam near the anomalous oasis of Las Vegas, a newborn city flush with vice and cash at a time when the rest of the country is mired in dust and degradation.

Filius Poe is an engineer from Wisconsin whose son drowned in a sailing accident, whose wife later died of a broken heart and whose only remaining dream is to be a part of the damming of the Colorado River. Lena McCardell is a divorcée from Oklahoma who comes west with her young son Burr at the behest of her best friend, who tantalizes them with visions of a fresh start

in the desert. And Lew Beck is a pitiless man whose near-midget size disguises a vicious temper that spreads a trail of blood and death in its wake.

Murkoff's prose style is vigorous and ruggedly American, inflected with a pinch of Bellow and DeLillo, and he's at his best when he applies it to the grandeur of the Western landscape, or scenes of men massed in industrial armies to tame that landscape. When Filius takes Lena for a look at the dam site—an unconventional means of courting, to say the least—we see it through her dazzled eyes:

Rows of powerful arc lights lined the banks of the river, their wide beams trained on the trestle bridge and the long line of trucks that lumbered forward in the cobalt haze. Lena watched their vast shadows slowly transmogrify into eerie abstractions and demonic contortions, then shrink into boxy clarity as the trucks came closer to the lights. Flagmen who walked into the beams were turned into colossal shadow puppets, their profiles stretched in ghoulish caricature, and below all the bright lights, the river flowed as harsh and roughskinned as hammered steel.

For all his facility as a poet of collective endeavors, Murkoff falters with the fine points. Too many of his subsidiary characters are clichés: Lena's ex-husband, for instance, a pious traveling salesman of religious literature who—surprise—practiced bigamy on the sly; or the lingerie salesman who gives Lena and Burr a lift across the desert and who—surprise—tries to slip his hand up Lena's dress while she naps in the passenger seat. Lew Beck, who sleeps with his thumb in his mouth, spends the novel wreaking havoc on the skulls of anyone who

Philip Connors is a writer in New York.

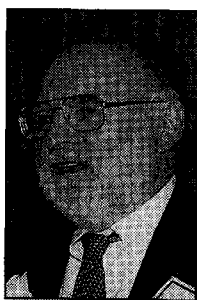
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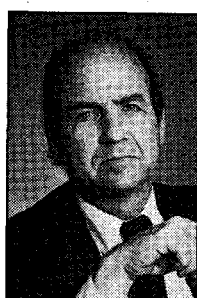
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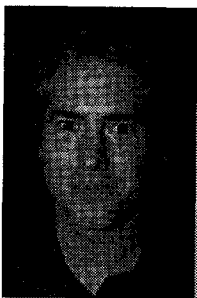
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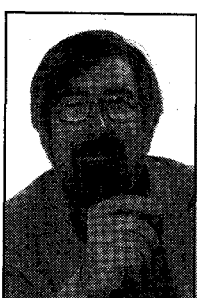
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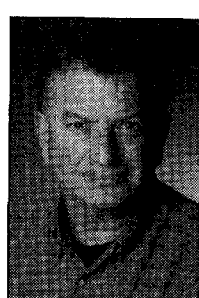
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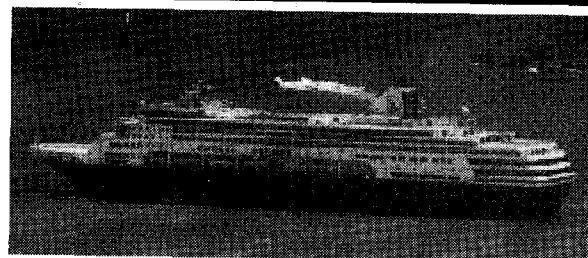


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so much as looks cross-eyed at him—a violent streak we're meant to believe is the result of his having been picked on as a boy for being a runt. His Oedipal issues run so deep we can only assume he hates his father for bequeathing him downsized DNA. On rare visits home to Los Angeles, he wings a hammer through Papa's butcher-shop window, or breaks the old man's fingers for kicks.

The novel might have shouldered these burdens on the beauty of the prose alone if Murkoff hadn't devised an ending straight out of Louis L'Amour. Lew is the swaggering outlaw with a pistol on his hip; Filius, the taciturn guardian of order and harmony in a land too often lawless. When Burr and Filius, the latter shot in the shoulder by the raging Lew, fall off the canyon's lip into the reservoir behind the dam, Filius gets his second chance—surprise—to save a boy from drowning. To keep myself amused, I imagined a play on Ronald Reagan's famous phrase in the cantankerous voice of Edward Abbey: "Mr. Murkoff, tear this dam down!" Murkoff could've used a dose of Abbey's mischievous humor; at the very least, he might have thrown a monkey wrench into his narrative, just to scramble things and keep us guessing. "Anyone who takes this book seriously will be shot," Abbey slyly said of the sequel to his famous novel of dam-loathing. Murkoff writes as if he'll shoot us if we don't.

Joseph Coulson's *The Vanishing Moon* is a sadder, quieter and more affecting work. It follows a Midwestern family through three generations of failed ambition and romantic blunders, and at its best it explores human frailty with the simplicity and directness of haiku. Composed of four discrete sections, narrated in turn by different characters, the novel at times achieves the quiet beauty of William Maxwell's finest work—generous, episodic, elegiac but not sentimental.

In the long first section, told in the voice of Stephen Tollman, Coulson seems to want to bring Faulkner to Ohio. Phil Tollman, Stephen's older brother, arrives in the world with a smoldering rage at the death of his stillborn twin. The family lives in Cleveland until Stephen's father loses his job at a radio repair shop at the onset of the Depression. They set up camp in a canvas tent in the woods, not far from a dark little shack occupied by an old man whom the children take to calling Wormwood. A haunting figure who dresses all in black, Wormwood watches the four Tollman kids from afar, focusing most in-

tently on Margie, a pubescent nymph with the unselfconscious beauty of a Rust Belt Lolita. Mr. Tollman stands haplessly by while his wife slowly goes blind; the children roam the woods, amusing themselves with daydreams and games.

We've seen this show before, I'm afraid. It's a simple game of either/or. Will Mr. Tollman cling with pathos and guilt to the wife he can't afford to take to the eye doctor, or will his shame force him to abandon the family? Will Wormwood be revealed as a dark prince of cunning and violence, or a spooky but misunderstood saint? When Margie dies in ambiguous circumstances after a visit to Wormwood's shack, I couldn't help but feel a bit befuddled by the lack of vital details; only later is the reader directly told the truth of what happened, and the gap between the death and the confirmation of its cause feels like a narrative trick.

Coulson's most convincing narrators are two post-adolescents who share the middle portion of the book. One of them, Katherine, tells of her affairs with the brothers Tollman—first with Stephen, and then, when he proves too dull for her tastes, with the darker and more dangerous Phil. This is one instance in which the sex does sell us something worth buying. Coulson's treatment of youthful lust is erotic in the best sense of the word—a perfect blend of candor and discretion. Katherine, a talented pianist and great beauty, a communist with progressive parents, is the most alluring—in every sense of the word—character in the book.

Later, Phil's son James takes the narrative baton. We're now in 1960s Detroit. Phil and Stephen work at General Motors. Stephen, still mourning the loss of Katherine's love, remains unmarried, while Phil rages drunkenly at the woman he married after leaving Katherine to join the Army. Here Coulson connects his characters to a whole range of American subjects—World War II and Vietnam, fast cars and baseball, racial tensions and industrial decline—but he does it obliquely, as a backdrop to the family drama. "My father disliked the fact that his sons were musicians," James says of the garage band he forms with his brother. "He believed that rock 'n' roll led to muscle cars, loud stereo systems, strange politics, and general irresponsibility"—a sad development for a guy whose most passionate affair was with a communist piano player.

When James's girlfriend begs him to accompany her to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, he begs off. Like many middle-class children of the time,

James and his brother only caught the televised version of the revolution. In retellings of the 1960s—whether historical, personal or fictional—the story of kids like them has often been elided in favor of the colorful antics of the Yippies, or the fierce struggles of SNCC and SDS and the reactionaries who opposed them. Coulson brings a whole demographic into stark relief here, the demographic—and the attitude—that ultimately triumphed by its example of self-absorbed passivity. Consider this, a passage that begins as a gentle hymn to first love and baseball:

I loved the smell of the ballpark, a sweet mix of dirt and grass and steamed hot dogs and beer. I loved the grit beneath my feet and the stickiness of the chairs. I loved the short left-field wall and the impossible depth of center field. I loved that Maria had fallen in love with me here and that I'd fallen in love with her. I loved the scent of her skin, the way she whistled, the way she walked and talked and watched. I loved the excitement of our bodies melding with the excitement of the game. I loved the way she kissed me when our team took the lead.

There were times at Tiger Stadium when we felt safe, when we felt a certain kind of hope for Detroit and for ourselves. Baseball, we knew, followed its own tragic cycles. Great players faded into bitter legends of injury and dissipation. Others betrayed the game itself or were betrayed by it. But in those days we ignored the changing seasons. Always we returned to the ballpark, the satisfying geometry of field, fence, and foul line. It stood as a bulwark against losses we could not imagine. Losses we could not understand. Somehow we felt that the world would make sense only as long as we stayed in our seats.

This subtle swivel between the personal and the apolitical is so deft you could be forgiven for missing it. *We ignored the changing seasons. The world would make sense only as long as we stayed in our seats.* The Tollman family, so entranced by familial dramas, so averse to public displays of passion and collective endeavor—at least outside a ballpark—lets the world go by without grabbing hold of it. Their tragedy is, in many ways, the tragedy of American life in the latter part of the twentieth century; we spend more time in our seats than ever.

After his early flirtation with elements of prairie gothic, Coulson serves up that tragedy without a hint of sermonizing. This is as real as realism gets. ■

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Courtney Love's new record is called *America's Sweetheart*. Take that. It's a name that has been used facetiously by the press to describe her. By wearing it as a badge of pride, she seeks to assume the name and at the same time spit it back—the modern way of sapping all the power from a hurtful phrase.

This is just the type of aggressive solipsism we've come to expect from her.

It seems a little late for this sort of irony, however. The title is meant to provoke a reaction—the MO of Love's career—a little controversy, some notice. Unlikely, since we've heard this kind of cry for attention from her time and again. In the event of a stir, however, it will be a reflexive one. Because the only real response to this title is to cringe.

The cover of *America's Sweetheart* is designed to appeal to the same 14-year-old boys who like fantasy comic books, complete with the canonical "head trip, mixed-message" portrayal of the female body—hers, presumably, though with the same sort of paint job you'll find in those "comic" books: black stockings, angel wings, hands tied, legs crossed and bound, boobs jutting forward. She's an angel, she's a whore; she's a victim, she's a man-killer. This is Courtney Love's idea of complexity.

You may remember that she used to be in a band, Hole. She's dropped that particular pretense—the band—and is now going solo, which is a relief, as she was never much of a team player where her celebrity was concerned. But the shedding of one pretense gives rise to another: that this is a solo album. The record is the product of collaboration, though you may have to search outside the album's liner notes for support of this claim, as the credits and lyrics are printed in white on a pink background in letters so small they are almost impossible to make out.

With the help of a magnifying glass, however, one can discern the now-expected long list of impressive producers—including

ing Josh Abraham (Staind, Korn) and James Barber (Ryan Adams)—as well as a number of musicians, including Samantha Maloney and Patty Schemel (both formerly of Hole). Absent from the list of musicians is Courtney Love.

One can also make out this line: "All lyrics by Courtney Love except 'Uncool,' by Courtney Love and Bernie Taupin" (you may remember him as Elton John's lyricist). There is no such straightforward admission about the origins of the music. In the notes, each song is listed above a parenthesis enclosing as many as five names. The name that occurs with the greatest frequency (that is, on all but three of twelve tracks) is "Perry." It hasn't been a secret in the music press, though it does seem to be one in the album's own liner notes, that this refers to Linda Perry, formerly of the band 4 Non Blondes, who has recently written songs for pop divas Pink and Christina Aguilera. Hiring a songwriter is an unexceptional arrangement these days and makes listening to records the musical equivalent of patronizing Starbuck's—you know what you're getting.

The quiet, almost surreptitious acknowledgment of Perry is, of course, intentional, as Love has received much grief in the past over her collaborations—charges that are due for sorting out. Hole's first record, *Pretty on the Inside* (1991), has been mostly cast aside as a bad-beginnings rant-a-thon, and there was no disputing who had written it. Their second, *Live Through This* (1994), was a breakthrough record for the group, though it suffered allegations that it had been written by Love's husband, the late Kurt Cobain of Nirvana, despite the fact that the songs are credited to Hole. Their third record, *Celebrity Skin* (1998), was written by a constellation of people—most notably Billy Corgan of Smashing Pumpkins—in various configurations laid out in the liner notes by a legend, each contributor matched to his/her corresponding

Priscilla Becker is a musician and writer whose book of poems, *Internal West*, won the Paris Review's book prize and was published in 2001 by Zoo Press. She teaches poetry, fiction and drama at Columbia and writes record reviews for *Tracks* magazine.

symbol—a method that seemed code for Love's embarrassment over the fact that she'd had help writing the record.

Some of the harassment she's received is legitimate. When you discover how little of Courtney Love is actually contained in the package labeled Courtney Love, you can't help but feel manipulated—it's like reading the ingredients on a jar of peanut butter only to find that it's mostly filler. At the same time, the rock-and-roll police, which have lurked behind every corner ever since women moved from backup singers and tambourine shakers to songwriters and guitar players, have brought out special forces in their zeal to find fault with Love. Sexism isn't wholly to blame—after all, Love's musical talent remains debatable. If she has any, its expression is certainly unreliable. The release of Hole's *Live Through This* seemed to establish her as an interesting new voice in rock. But the album was followed by a four-year musical silence that, because rock years are akin to dog years, put her career dangerously close to the grave.

In the interim, she tried another, all-American approach to fame—the movies. In *The People vs. Larry Flynt* (1996) she played the *Hustler* magnate's emotionally unstable, drug-addicted wife, Althea, and in *Man on the Moon* (1999) she played comedian Andy Kaufman's long-suffering girlfriend Lynne Margulies. Love also tried tirelessly to disguise herself through plastic surgery—to surreal effect. It was a strange, streetwalker-in-a-gown phase of her career, and the transformation from the outside never completely took, because despite *Pretty on the Inside*'s opposite allusion, Courtney Love seems, in fact, to be ugly on the inside. She's too uncontrollable and transparent to manipulate our perception of her successfully. Her efforts at falseness fail—and that's refreshing.

Her acting talent, however, was more generally agreed upon than her musical talent, and she even received a Golden Globe nomination in 1997 for her performance in *The People vs. Larry Flynt*. The part had the air of proper alignment, and, in fact, many of Love's roles seem predicated on a close reading of her own tabloid personality, which is a function of her real genius—her talent for fame. Courtney Love has badly-behaved herself into our consciousness.

It has to be said: It is impossible to listen to *America's Sweetheart* unbiased, to come to it clean, so to speak. Love's concerns, over the course of four albums, haven't shifted much: herself, money, exploitation, celebrity, revenge, jealousy. Add to these drugs and driving and you've got the idea. It's not been a secret that *America's*

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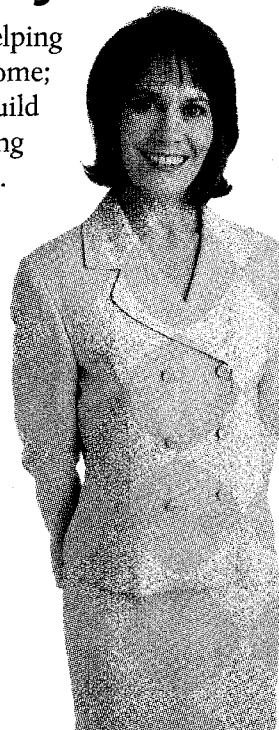
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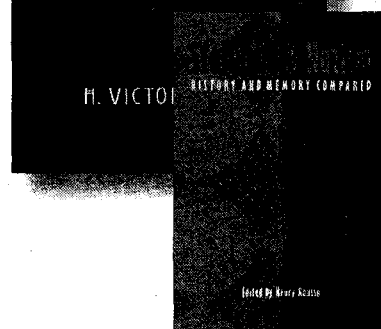
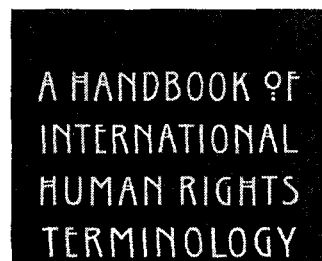
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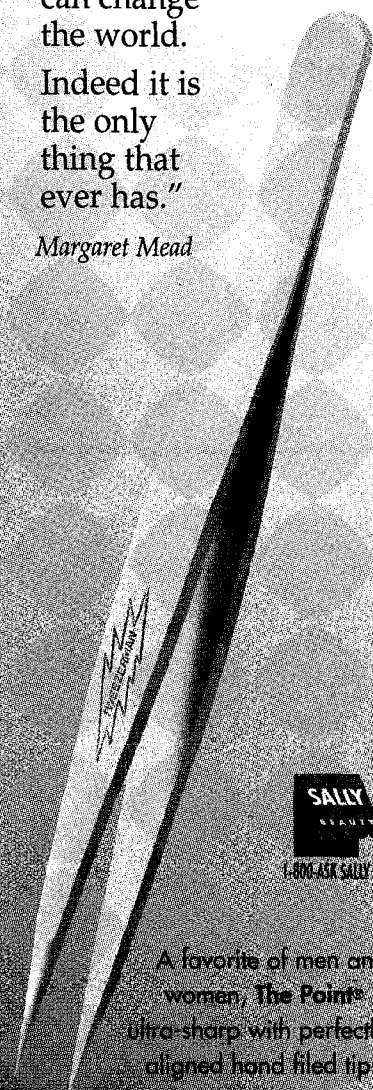
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Sweetheart has had a troubled and lengthy genesis—the album's been six years in the making—and listening to it, you can tell. It's as though Love has been on ice or in a drug-induced oblivion all these years—oh, right, *she has been*. One lyric says, "They say rock is dead"—yeah, ten years ago they did. Another song lists 800 numbers, which were new and something to gawk at about as long ago. Which is to say there's nothing fresh here—sonically or otherwise—but it's a much better record than her last effort with Hole. Love's voice is back, for one, though it sounds like it's back just in time for it to go out again. It's the more worn version of the voice on her first and second records—*her* voice—coarse and off-color, and it's preferable to the ironed-out one on *Celebrity Skin*, a ludicrous attempt to make her more palatable and capitalize on her brief movie-star phase of the late 1990s. Also, the production on

the new album is dirtier, which suits her.

America's Sweetheart is a rock record, and that's good, full of exorcism and bile, which is, sadly, Courtney Love's one note. And though the record contains a couple of slower songs, they do little to balance the theme of the record, the theme of her career—her own ugly exhibitionism.

The songs on *America's Sweetheart* are full of modulations, bridges and outros, and many of them go on too long. For instance, "All the Drugs"—a love song addressed to her lover, drugs. The song repeats the line "all the drugs in the world..." so many times it could only appeal to someone as wasted as the singer, and, in fact, that is the impression one gets from listening to this record—that Courtney Love was wasted during its recording. The length of many of the songs—which seem to be extended only so that we can hear her scream on—is a very bad omen: She doesn't intend to go away. ■

FILMS

Speak, Memory

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ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND • SPARTAN • DOGVILLE

Not wanting to curse Charlie Kaufman with too much praise, I'm tempted to say that his nonexistent twin Donald is the best American screenwriter since Preston Sturges. Donald won't let the comparison upset him. As you may recall from *Adaptation*, he is not the type to fret about living up to his

reputation, or anything else; and besides, he's nonexistently dead, having been murdered in the last reel of his only film. Let Donald be the genius; or say that some random puppetmaster is responsible for what Kaufman writes, controlling him from within as in *Being John Malkovich*; or pretend that his scripts, though outwardly witty and inventive, are in fact damnable instruments of violence, like Chuck Barris's TV shows in *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*.

Better yet, wipe all praise for Kaufman from your memory, after the example of his unforgettable new film, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*.

Even Sturges couldn't have gotten away with that title. It's from Alexander Pope: "Eloisa to Abelard," a poem that previously worked its way into *Being John Malkovich*. In that Kaufman script, the puppetmaster performed Eloisa's story for a street-corner audience, and got popped on the nose for his trouble. In *Eternal Sunshine of*

the Spotless Mind, Kaufman's character Clementine (Kate Winslet) aspires to the pristine oblivion that Eloisa desires; and like Eloisa—like Kaufman's character Joel (Jim Carrey)—she, too, gets popped on the nose (figuratively speaking), not by any outside force but by her own "loose soul unbounded." Pretty fancy stuff, for a sci-fi romantic comedy.

The sci-fi element is a new medical procedure, performed out of a suspiciously shabby second-floor office somewhere on Long Island. Clementine visited this clinic after breaking up with Joel, so she could have him erased from her memory. Upon learning that she dumped him so radically, the outraged Joel now decides he'll do the same to her. "Is there any risk of brain damage?" he asks during his consultation. "Technically speaking," the doctor replies, "the procedure *is* brain damage." To make the patient more comfortable (or to save on office rent?), the actual erasing is done at night in the victim's home, by a couple of

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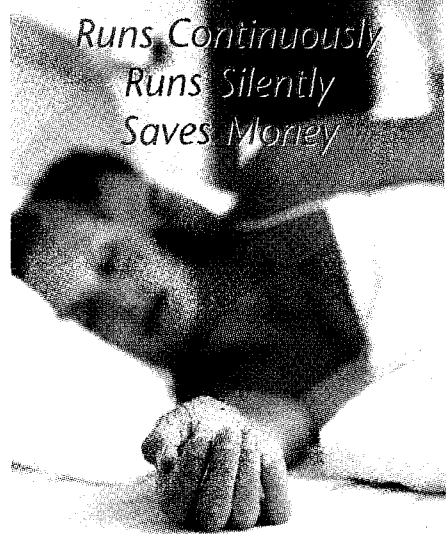
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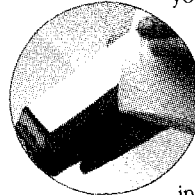


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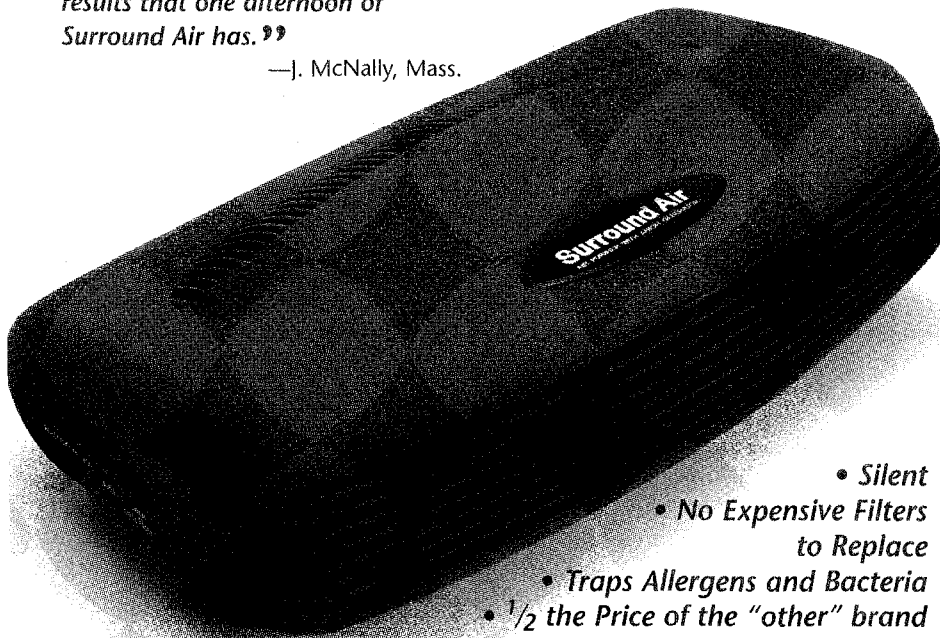
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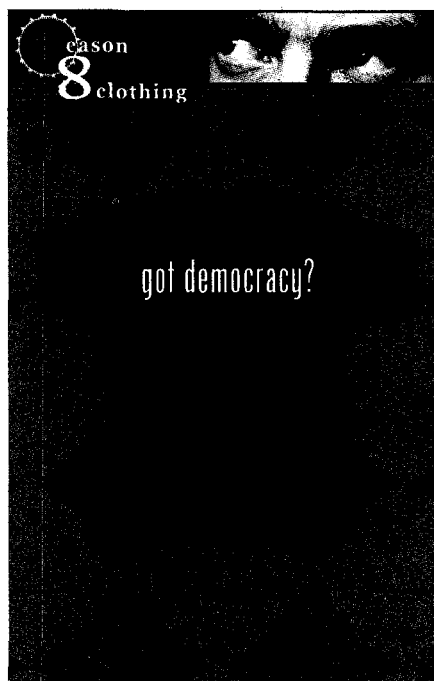
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slacker technicians whose behavior, in other movies, would be construed as felonious entry and assault. Although some computers are in evidence, the main equipment turns out to be a metal helmet that resembles a colander, and that makes the supine, unconscious Joel look like a little boy playing Flash Gordon.

The methods to which Joel has resorted may seem crude and desperate, but they're nothing compared with his behavior. As the action shifts to the inside of his mind (where much of the movie will now play out), you watch him live again through a series of fast-fading moments with Clementine, each of which turns out to be dominated by his own nastiness. The walls of rooms fly apart around him, faces melt into unformed wax, rows of book covers turn a uniform white; and as these things vanish, so too does Joel's memory of his brutal coldness toward Clementine, his unforgivable insults. The effective target of the brain-wipe, apparently, is not the pain that she caused him, but his knowledge of the suffering he inflicted on her. It's no wonder, then, that he begins softening toward her, as guilt loosens its grip; and when, by way of plot complication, the dreaming Joel hears his technicians talk about Clementine, it's no wonder that their spookily echoing voices move him to resist the procedure.

Now one track of the story is taking place inside Joel, as he struggles to hold on to a memory of Clementine; and one track takes place in the world outside, where Clementine puzzles over a residue of feeling that keeps troubling her, a nameless and unaccountable spot on her mind. This setup provides Kaufman with the challenges he revels in (don't ever let him sucker you into a game of three-dimensional chess); but it also offers an occasion for the more fundamental movie pleasures. Kaufman himself takes advantage of the structure by delivering thrills in the *Lonedale Operator* tradition, with Joel involved in a prolonged chase sequence and Clementine starring as the feisty gal-in-peril. For Michel Gondry, the film's director (and a co-author of its story), the script serves as a great excuse for a magic show (among my favorite tricks: the Amazing Shrinking Joel, crouched under a kitchen table at age 4). And for a couple of quick-change artists like Winslet and Carrey, the screenplay is an invitation to perform, perform, perform.

Winslet is especially chameleonic, since Clementine is changeable even when she isn't popping in and out of Joel's memories and fantasies. She's a lush young woman of variable hair color, sometimes walking around under something called "Blue Ruin," sometimes wearing a shade that goes

with her name and favorite sweatshirt. Carrey's Joel, by contrast, is a somber, inward type, who wraps dark clothes around his meatless frame and hides his eyes behind an awning of loose hair. If you're stuck with an image of Carrey as hyperactive goofball, you will find his performance here to be astonishingly nuanced and restrained. In fact, you'll make that discovery even if you've got a clearer idea of him, and know how well he can tap into both vulnerability and an intense spitefulness.

What I love best about *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* is the way Joel abandons that spitefulness in the end, if only provisionally, and Clementine lets herself settle down for once, so the two can share a persuasive, deeply moving moment of forgiveness. I also love how this ending prompts you to return, in your own memory, to the daringly lengthy prologue to the film, re-evaluating the meaning of its dialogue and key events. You revisit something Clementine had said to Joel—"Right now, I'm glad you're nice"—and you understand it in a devastatingly new way. You recall how Joel had found a dent in his car, and you now see the justice of the note he left for the driver in the next parking space. Joel himself didn't see it; when he scrawled "Thank you" on a scrap of paper, he was merely being sarcastic, in a hopelessly passive way. But a dent is a kind of memory set in metal; and by the end of the movie, you know why Joel has reason to feel grateful for this one.

I'm grateful, too. Thank you, Donald Kaufman. Thank you.

sometimes wonder if David Mamet, too, has a nonexistent twin, who turns out screenplays so the real brother can work in the theater. However enjoyable Mamet's films may be—the best of them, including the new *Spartan*, are thoroughly entertaining—they never risk his emotions, or the viewer's, as the plays do. Maybe hard experience has taught him to ratchet down his ambitions when he makes a film. (The fate at the box office of his one truly nervy picture, *Homicide*, could not have been encouraging.) Or maybe he's found that film works best for him when it conveys the showier, more public side of his preoccupations, as it does in *Spartan*.

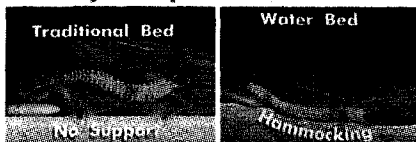
It has long been one of Mamet's conceits that the Code of Manhood is actually written down somewhere. The rules may be inscribed unintelligibly in a numismatics catalogue, as in *American Buffalo*, or laid out usefully in the *Boy Scout Handbook* (see *The Edge*). In *Spartan*, the rules are printed on a little card that one generation of soldiers passes on to the next. Mamet appreciates how a guy might venerate such a totem;

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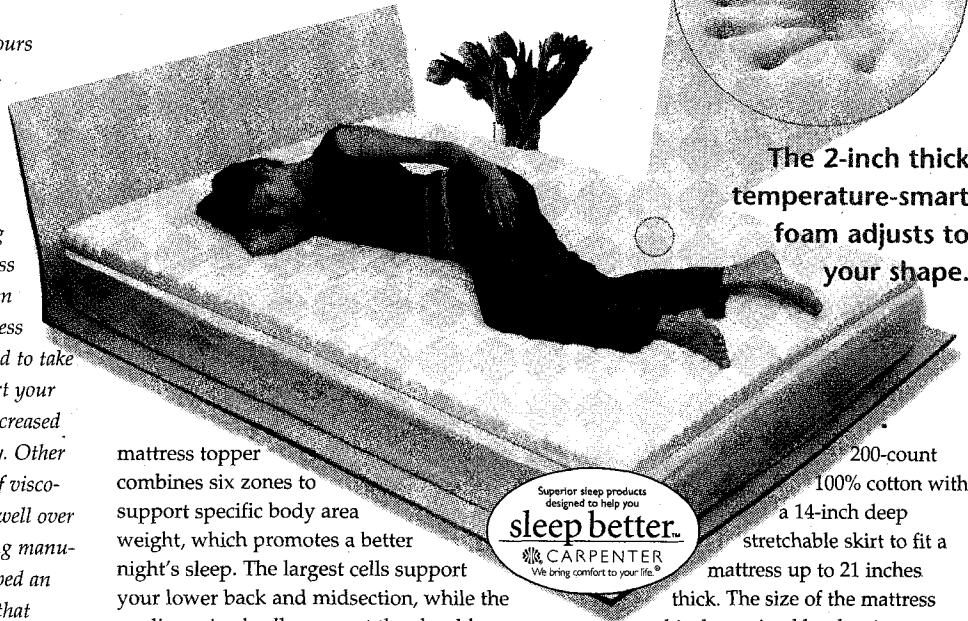
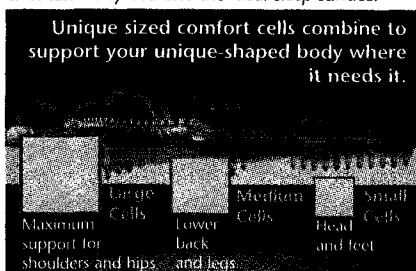
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he knows the Code of Manhood still runs the world, and he wants you to feel its allure. Past a certain point in the story, though, he also sees to it that Hard Guy Number One, now thoroughly disillusioned, uses the code as a cigarette wrapper.

Hard Guy in this case is a secret agent commando extreme ops killing machine who always does what it takes. How smart of Mamet, as director, to give the role to Val Kilmer, who is in his own way an equally can-do type. You expect Kilmer to bring to the assignment his extraordinary physical grace; the surprise is that he delivers so many of the lines in his upper vocal register, almost dreamily at times, as if to suggest that this cold professional is not so much emotionless as emotionally underdeveloped. When challenged to think (a rare occurrence), Hard Guy can even become testy—which is as much slack as the character needs for the plot to proceed.

The President's daughter is missing. (You sense that Mamet had to hold himself back from capitalizing the whole sentence.) Hard Guy Val has only a little time to find her, employing his audience-pleasing methods of disguise, deception and gung-ho brutality. The action, though intricate, clips along briskly; nobody (Mamet included) has any time for pretension, and so you're completely engaged. Beyond that, nothing needs to be said about the appropriately titled *Spartan*—except that the pivotal role belongs to an infuriated woman (Linda Kimbrough). Her message to Val, which turns around the whole movie, will set off an echo for anyone who has followed Mamet's film career. Perhaps you will remember these words from his screenplay for *The Verdict*, spoken by another hurt, contemptuous woman: "Who are these men?"

For the most recent in his long series of stunts, Lars von Trier chalked some building footprints onto the floor of a soundstage, added a bare minimum of props and flats and then shot an entire feature in the transparently artificial town he'd created. The name of the place, and the movie, is *Dogville*, a title that evokes both the stuntmaker's cynicism and his old Dogme 95 tricks.

Nicole Kidman, as game and smashing as ever, stars as a mysterious fugitive, who at first is refused shelter in the 1930s Colorado town but then is taken in, grudgingly, thanks to the insistence of the would-be writer and moral-rearmament crusader Tom Edison (Paul Bettany). There is rising action (the townsfolk come to love her) and falling action (they begin to use her most cruelly, as generally happens to the heroines of

von Trier's sadomasochistic fantasies). The movie breaks the usual pattern only in having a bang-bang denouement; someone must always play the victim in a von Trier production, but this time there's a last-minute change in cast.

I don't deny that von Trier has talent. He kept me staring in fascination at the story he was unfolding. So what, I thought, that he knows nothing and cares nothing about the real America. But then came the closing horse laugh. The film ends with a montage of Depression-era photographs—irreplaceable documents of human suffering and resistance—accompanied jocosely on the soundtrack by David Bowie's "Young Americans."

To paraphrase a celebrated review by François Truffaut: Lars von Trier despises you. Despise him back. ■



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WASHINGTON, DC, NATION DISCUSSION GROUP meets third Saturday of the month at 3-5 PM. We invite new members. For more information call Frances Pasmanick at (202) 363-0278, e-mail tpasmanick@juno.com.

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COPY EDITOR. Part-time opening in the *Nation* copy department for assistant copy editor. Send résumé to Copy Chief, *The Nation*, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003 or e-mail to rcarey@thenation.com. AA/EOE.

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EDITOR. California Nurses Association publications and communications. Send résumé and writing samples to Executive Director, CNA, 2000 Franklin St., Oakland, CA 94612; fax, (510) 663-2771; e-mail, execoffice@calnurses.org.

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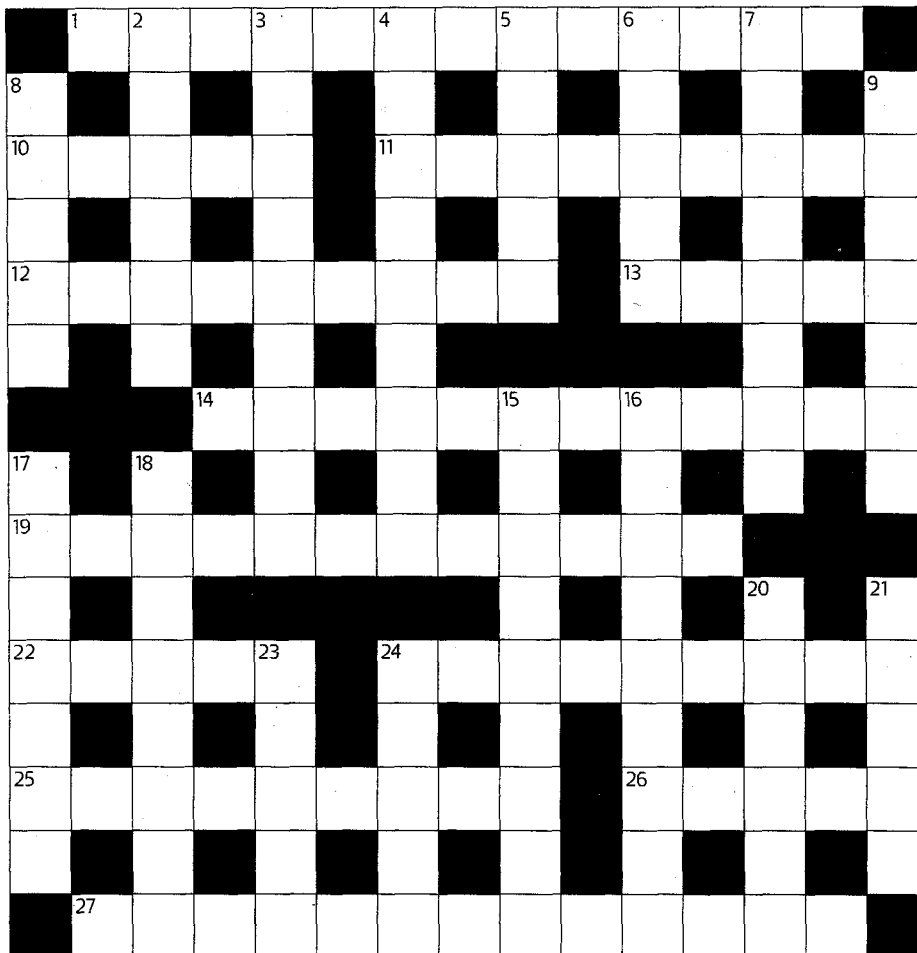
FRANK W. LEWIS

ACROSS

- 1 What is involved in a vanishing act is wrongly said to doubly soften the auditory equipment, and perhaps can, to a point. (13)
- 10 Works like a rope, sort of. (5)
- 11 Miss Bara is about to give weapons to a main force at one time. (3,6)
- 12 It's a bad thing to emit returning after dark. (9)
- 13 Took a chair, that is—and wrote some music. (5)
- 14 What servants and delivery boys were supposed to take to bring one up, and perhaps captivate one. (4,8)
- 19 Commonly off one's rocker, as one might have seen the steamboat coming. (5,3,4)
- 22 Kirk Edwards has a way of showing you how he is bothered. (5)
- 24 What a pig might be doing, to a point, with everything—and nothing—given to the flapper. (9)
- 25 What impolite dinner guests do, and in bad nature, too! (3,3,3)
- 26 Offspring should be regularly put out, as such. (5)
- 27 In his work, does one make a habit of it? (5,8)

DOWN

- 2 A long cold spell, obviously. (3,3)
- 3 Fortunately this policy came to an end, in a part Heidi didn't quite finish... (9)
- 4 ...and The Man of the Family has the wrong part, with one on part of his foot. (9)
- 5 Something like the poplar Mr. Lincoln showed to the French. (5)
- 6 Improperly cares for quite a tract of land. (5)
- 7 A fairly large number possesses decades of it, and puts one in the proper place. (8)
- 8 and 17 Even the minor nobility is wrapped in furs, but explosives have been planted under it this way! (12)



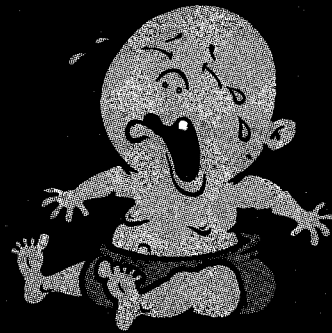
- 9 Such a table permits the lower limbs to have room to swing. (7)
- 15 They should be considered rather rich dwarfs, and be in trouble with the airbags. (9)
- 16 Hurried with a little less than some gin concoction, paying for the People's Delivery. (9)
- 17 See 8
- 18 Young Finn has his rest broken because of an insistent salesman. (8)
- 20 Sit up when a little girl (sometimes lazy) asks for something to take care of the sniffles. (6)
- 21 Travel up to the lion's home in Utah. (5)
- 23 Passes on a point being placed in it, as one eats in style. (5)
- 24 Telegraphed what a witness might be for sound effect. (5)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2934

T	A	C	K	S	R	E	H	E	A	R	S	A	L
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WE GOT A KEY PROVISION RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND THROWN OUT.